

Faces of the Employee Free Choice Act

Dan Luevano

Electrician
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Fighting for a Better Workplace

Dan Luevano spent 10 years as an electrician at a Colorado company, starting out as an apprentice after he answered their ad in a newspaper. Although he enjoyed the job, and had stuck with the company through 10 years of changes, Dan was also worried about the direction the company was taking, particularly as his employer started to hire unqualified workers. So in the fall of 2005, Dan initiated a meeting with a local union organizer because as he puts it, “I believed that what the union had to offer would benefit everyone: employees and employer alike.” Most of Dan’s coworkers agreed, but the company’s owner opposed the move and began to harass his employees.

Resisting Anti-Union Retaliation

Shortly after the drive to organize began, Dan was fired. Though he was reinstated soon afterward by the National Labor Relations Board, his employer hired a replacement and paid that person \$2 more an hour than Dan – even after he’d waited six years for a raise. Dan was also isolated from other employees, sent out on jobs without any help, and his hours were cut from 40 a week to about 15, making it very tough for Dan to support his family of six.

At the union election in January 2006, although a majority of the workers had initially signed union registration cards, the employer’s intimidation tactics resulted in a tie vote. Dan and most of his coworkers left soon thereafter, and now many of them belong to a union in their new workplaces. Today Dan works with a union contractor and says, “Nowadays, I can’t wait to wake up and go to work.”

Why We Need the Employee Free Choice Act

If the Employee Free Choice Act had been in effect Dan and his coworkers would have had the right to form a union after a majority of employees signed cards, instead of being subjected to a campaign of employer intimidation before the election.

“I don’t want anyone to feel sorry for me because of what happened, but I want them to be aware that this has happened more than it should,” says Dan, who currently represents his local union in different meetings and talks to people about the Employee Free Choice Act. “People shouldn’t be punished for wanting to make their lives better. The Employee Free Choice Act isn’t just about people joining unions – it’s about making a better economy for all workers and lifting up the middle class.”