

Faces of the Employee Free Choice Act

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Learning a Hard Lesson

Even though Joe Bordelon grew up in a union family, he had his doubts about joining one when he began working as a technician at ADT Security Services about nine years ago. In fact, during his job interview, Joe told his future manager he had no plans to join the union – something his manager was pleased to hear.

But soon after he was hired, Joe and his coworkers were stunned to learn they had inadvertently signed a union decertification petition, which would have dropped the union as their workplace representative. ADT had misled them by saying it was merely a form to get more information about company benefits. "I joined the union about a week after that attempt to decertify the union," says Joe, who had since learned more about the benefits of union membership. "I wanted to learn why the company despised the union so much." The company eventually failed in its attempt and Joe learned a valuable lesson about how far the company would go to fight the union.



Standing By His Union

As the years went by Joe continued to excel at his job. He did so well in fact, he was offered management positions on several occasions and took one briefly. But because Joe felt he was being manipulated by management – which wanted him to leave the union – he went back to his old job and became even more active in his union. Today Joe is the chief steward for his local chapter.

Meanwhile, ADT continued to try to get rid of the union. In February 2008, the union had to petition the National Labor Relations Board to bring the company back to the bargaining table. During that time, the company again tried to decertify the union, drawing out the process as long as possible. Ultimately, a federal mediator was brought in to help the two sides reach an agreement.

Why We Need the Employee Free Choice Act

Joe believes provisions in the Employee Free Choice Act that impose a timeline on negotiations and increase penalties for terminating or harassing employees based on union involvement would have made a real difference for him and his union. "If you start affecting the company's pocketbook, that will change things quickly," he explains.

"It's not fair that we ask the middle class to suffer and not get raises equal to the cost of living, while companies lay people off and continue to pay millions of dollars to CEOs," says Joe. "The middle class is disappearing. What better way to grow the economy than with this bill? It will help people stand up to billionaire companies and put money back in the hands of consumers."