

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Virginia Businesses and Industry Call on Congressional Delegation to Reject  
Employee Free Choice Act**

*“Card Check” bill would radically alter labor laws and strain employer, employee relations*

Virginia’s business community is calling on the Commonwealth’s congressional delegation to oppose the Employee Free Choice Act (“EFCA”), expected to be introduced today in both the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate.

EFCA, or “card check”, would radically alter labor laws and fuel antagonism between employers and employees. EFCA would eliminate an employee’s right to a secret ballot in union elections. Just as problematic is the mandated use of federal arbitrators who can unilaterally impose the terms of a contract between a business and a newly formed union, without the approval of the employer or a vote by the employees.

**Comments from Virginia Business Leaders:**

**Hugh Keogh, President and CEO of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce**

“EFCA is a brazen attempt by organized labor to tilt the playing field in organizing efforts to favor the unions in a clear and unmistakable way. Our labor-management atmosphere in Virginia for many years has been conducive to rising productivity and largely free of work stoppages. The current economic uncertainty is hardly the time to upset that fragile apple cart.

“Where is the freedom in a piece of legislation that denies workers one of the most basic liberties, the right to a secret ballot? The secret ballot gives workers the ability to state their choice, for or against the union, without fear of intimidation or reprisal from union organizers, management, or fellow employees. By stripping away the secret ballot and replacing it with the simple checking of a card, quite likely in a public setting, EFCA eliminates the most important and cherished safeguard available to the American workers.”

**Brett Vassey, President and CEO of the Virginia Manufacturers Association**

"The main thrust of EFCA is fundamentally anti-democratic and will only serve to erode Virginia's right-to-work statute, productive work environment and competitiveness."

**Julia Hammond, Virginia Director of the National Federation of Independent Business**

“In a time of economic uncertainty for small businesses around the state, the last thing Virginia’s family-owned businesses need is a federal arbitrator who knows nothing about their business, dictating the wages and benefits they must pay their employees.

“EFCA’s binding arbitration provision takes critical operational decisions away from the small business owner and places them in the hands of a federal arbitrator who is accountable to no one. A dictate from an uninformed bureaucrat cannot and should not replace the judgment of the employer and the employees who have collectively labored to ensure that the small business prospers and grows.”

**Laurens Sartoris, President of the Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association**

“Hospitals throughout the Commonwealth strongly oppose EFCA. We believe that employees have the right to unionize, but we also believe employees have an equal right to reject union membership. Regardless of their individual choice, an employee must be allowed to express their preference in an environment that is free of manipulation and potential coercion. The only method that truly protects employees is the secret ballot, yet EFCA forcefully denies employees this time honored protection.”

**Bobbie Kilberg, President and CEO of the Northern Virginia Technology Council**

“Technology companies, perhaps more than most business ventures, rely on close collaboration between management and their employees in an innovative workplace environment. In this rapidly changing global market place, survival for technology companies depends on employees and management sitting on the same side of the table.

“From top to bottom, EFCA is designed to sow the seeds of discord within the workplace. From possible union intimidation as a result of the elimination of the secret ballot, to the loss of a company’s sovereignty as a result of mandatory binding arbitration, EFCA systematically places employees and employers in an adversarial position that can only serve to stymie innovation and limit the fortunes of employer and employee alike. In an economy as difficult as the one we currently face, our collective focus must be on building bridges between labor and management, not creating more profound divides.”

**More than 20 Virginia business organizations oppose EFCA. They include:**

- National Federation of Independent Business
- Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association
- Northern Virginia Technology Council
- Virginia Ready-Mixed Concrete Association
- Virginia Association of Broadcasters
- Virginia Hospitality and Travel Association
- Virginia Retail Federation
- Virginia Chamber of Commerce
- Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce
- Fairfax Chamber of Commerce
- Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Harrisonburg-Rockingham Chamber of Commerce
- Virginia Poultry Federation
- Virginia Retail Merchants Association
- Virginia Healthcare Association
- Virginia Trucking Association
- Virginia Manufacturers Association
- Home Builders Association of Virginia
- Virginia Petroleum, Convenience and Grocery Association
- Virginia Biotechnology Association
- Associated General Contractors

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