

# Minnesota Business Leaders

*A coalition powered by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce along with chambers, associations, and businesses to save the secret ballot.*



**Update: Week of July 20**

**MBL Coalition Members are taking action TODAY to stop this misnamed and misguided legislation**

The coalition of business organizations is your go to source for EFCA information and updates. Sign up today if you would like to join the fight to save the secret ballot!

Albert Lea-Freeborn County Chamber  
 Alexandria Lakes Area Chamber  
 Apple Valley Chamber  
 Austin Area Chamber  
 Brainerd Lakes Chamber  
 Burnsville Chamber  
 Chamber of Commerce of Fargo  
 Moorhead  
 Chamber Grand Forks/East Grand Forks  
 Dakota County Regional Chamber  
 Duluth Area Chamber  
 Eden Prairie Chamber  
 Edina Chamber  
 Elk River Area Chamber  
 Fairmont Area Chamber  
 Faribault Area Chamber  
 Greater Wayzata Area Chamber  
 Grand Rapids Area Chamber  
 Hastings Area Chamber  
 Hutchinson Area Chamber  
 I-94 West Chamber  
 International Falls Area Chamber  
 Lakeville Area Chamber  
 Litchfield Chamber  
 Marshall Area Chamber  
 MetroNorth Chamber  
 Midway Chamber

## Coalition Leader Meets with Senator Franken's Staff

**In response to the Coalition's notice to MBL members to meet with Senator Franken's new staff during their tour of Minnesota, MBL Coalition Chair Bruce Nustad, President of the TwinWest Chamber of Commerce, met with Senator Franken's staff. Bruce files this report with the Coalition:**

Immediately following his certification as Minnesota's 40th U.S. Senator, Al Franken announced that his new staff was holding 60 meetings around the state to get to know citizens, community advocates, and businesses leaders. A few days later I found myself at Plymouth City Hall sitting with two of the Senator's new staff members. They explained that Senator Franken wanted to get to know the issues that Minnesotans hold important as he begins representing them.

We talked about a few federal issues that the business community in the western suburbs cares about, including health care reform and transportation. I expressed TwinWest's concerns with the Employee Free Choice Act and its provisions, as well as our involvement with the Minnesota Business Leaders coalition. After I was done walking through our concerns one of the staffers simply said, "We'll pass those thoughts on to the Senator." I appreciated the thought, not necessarily expecting anything other than "the chamber doesn't support EFCA" to be written on a piece of paper and filed as a constituent report.

Two days later, Senator Franken called to introduce himself. Not by coincidence, we talked briefly about EFCA, among other issues. Senator Franken thanked TwinWest for understanding and caring about issues that impact Minnesotans. Growing up in St. Louis Park, Senator Franken seems to grasp that successful businesses play a role in building strong communities. While TwinWest and the Senator may look at EFCA from a different

Minneapolis Regional Chamber  
 Minnesota Chamber  
 MN Associated Builders & Contractors  
 MN Automobile Dealers Association  
 MN Beverage Association  
 MN Business Partnership  
 MN Grocers Association  
 MN Lodging Association  
 MN Restaurant Association  
 MN Trucking Association  
 MN Warehouse Association  
 North Hennepin Area Chamber  
 Northfield Area Chamber  
 Owatonna Area Chamber  
 Printing Industry of MN  
 Redwood Area Chamber  
 Richfield Chamber  
 River Heights Chamber  
 Rochester Area Chamber  
 Saint Paul Area Chamber  
 Saint Peter Area Chamber  
 SouthWest Metro Chamber  
 St. Cloud Area Chamber  
 Thief River Falls Chamber  
 TwinWest Chamber  
 U.S. Chamber  
 Waconia Chamber of Commerce  
 Wahpeton Breckenridge Area Chamber  
 White Bear Area Chamber  
 Willmar Lakes Area Chamber  
 Winona Area Chamber  
 Worthington Area Chamber

#### Card Check in the News

[Statement by SEIU President Andy Stern on the Employee Free Choice Act](#)  
 By Michael Whitney

In response to [today's New York Times piece](#) on the [Employee Free Choice Act](#), SEIU President Andy Stern issued the following statement:

"As we have said from day one, majority sign-up is the best way for workers to have the right to choose a voice at their workplace. The Employee Free Choice Act is going through the usual legislative process, and we expect a vote on a majority sign-up provision in the final bill or by amendment in both houses of Congress."

[AFL-CIO Says 'There is No Deal.'](#)

[Labor Law: Negotiations Continue on EFCA Bill Despite Report on Compromise Deal](#)

#### MBL Resource Website

**Have you visited the coalition's new website yet?**

perspective, I was pleased to report to my Executive Committee that Senator Franken had taken a moment during what I am sure is an immensely busy time to reach out to the business community. I look forward to that open dialogue continuing with the Senator and his staff.

I sincerely hope this opportunity will translate into an understanding of the concerns business has about some of the policy proposals coming out of Washington and that the Senator will work to help business grow in Minnesota as he votes on key business issues in the U.S. Senate.

**-Bruce Nustad, President, TwinWest Chamber of Commerce**

#### Take Action Now

Clearly we have reached a critical point in EFCA legislation. Please take action and let your opinion be heard! To contact Senator Franken's office:

1. Go to [www.mnbusinessleaders.com](http://www.mnbusinessleaders.com).
2. Click on "Take Action Now!"
3. Send Senator Franken a message urging him to reconsider his stance of EFCA.
4. Pass the link on to your friends and colleagues.

#### Call to Action on EFCA

EFCA is ramping up and continues to be a big issue, both in Washington and here in Minnesota - as evidenced by the Teamsters running the following ad in the Monday, July 20 *Star Tribune* that attacks the U.S. Chamber and other organizations seeking to educate about the anti-worker and anti-employer provisions of the bill:

[www.mnbusinessleaders.com](http://www.mnbusinessleaders.com)

is your information source for all things card check. The site has all of the EFCA resources and information you and your members will need. Powered by the U.S. Chamber, you will find links to the Chamber's card check Toolkit, EFCA facts and figures, and all of the latest news on the legislation.

### America's Leading Newspapers Weigh In

The editorial boards of some of the nation's leading newspapers, such as The Wall Street Journal, the L.A. Times, and The Washington Post, took a look at the Card Check bill. They concluded decisively that the legislation effectively eliminates private ballots. See the link below and read for yourself.

» [Read the editorials](#)

### Have you joined the Virtual March Against Card Check yet?



<http://secretballot.voteforbusiness.net/>

### Minnesota Business Leaders: Your Go-To Resource

Click [here](#) for a list of the coalition's contacts.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

## Echoes of One Day in July 1934 Resonate Among Workers Today



By C. THOMAS KEEGEL, General Secretary-Treasurer, International Brotherhood of Teamsters

SEVENTY-FIVE years ago this summer, workers fought and died in Minneapolis for the right to form a union. Men were arrested and shot; women were beaten. From May to August, spectacular street battles raged between striking truck drivers and employers' goon squads.

This week, a series of events will commemorate one of the most tragic days of that long hot summer. On the 20th of July, 67 unarmed strikers were gunned down on the corner of 3rd St. North and 6th Avenue North. Two died from their injuries.

That day was a low point in the desperate year of 1934, the worst of the Great Depression. But the workers, led by Teamsters Local 574, prevailed. They gained their first foothold in the city when employers agreed to recognize their right to form a union.

Workers then as now need to be able to defend themselves from employers who abuse or intimidate them. By uniting with each other in a union they can bargain with their employers for fair wages and decent treatment.

Today, as in 1934, working families are experiencing severe economic troubles. And today, as in 1934, their right to form a union is under assault.

Much about the events of 1934 will resonate with today's union organizers. Back then, Minneapolis was controlled by a small business elite. Their group, the "Citizens Alliance," kept unions away by blacklisting and spying on union organizers. The Citizens Alliance even raised its own militia.

The Teamsters nevertheless managed to gain support in Minneapolis in the early '30s, organizing 3,000 truck drivers who worked from 2 a.m. to 6 p.m. for low wages.

The trucking companies refused to recognize the union. On May 16, 1934, the Teamsters began a strike centered in what is now the Warehouse District.

Three days later, dozens of strikers were beaten

trying to prevent scabs from unloading a truck — the first of many violent confrontations over the next 2-1/2 months. For the workers, July 20 was the worst.

In late July, the National Guard imposed martial law, but the strike continued. Finally, on August 21, the Citizens Alliance offered a settlement that the truck drivers ratified. Their lives began to improve.

Today, union-busting battles are no longer fought in the open street but in the boss's office. The old company goon squads have been replaced by high-priced consultants. These professional union-busters skirt the law to consign workers to wages and working conditions that spell poverty, illness and humiliation.

A recent Economic Policy Institute study shows how intense and widespread union busting has become. In more than 50 cases, the employer incited violence and blamed it on union organizers. The study showed that employers threatened workers with plant closures or pay cuts in half of the organizing campaigns studied between 1999 and 2004. Pro-union workers were fired in a



A Teamster is beaten by a thug hired by the Citizens Alliance.

third of all campaigns.

No longer do employers need the National Guard to put workers down. Tens of millions of dollars are being poured into an anti-union propaganda campaign by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and a dozen front groups with names selected to disguise their intentions. The "Citizens Alliance" of yesteryear is now "Coalition for a Democratic Workplace."

That is why it's so important that the Employee Free Choice Act becomes law. The bill, introduced in Congress in March, would give workers a fair and free chance to form a union — without taking away their right to a secret ballot. It would give workers the ability to secure a first contract in a reasonable amount of time and create strong penalties when companies break the law.

Those three tenets of the Employee Free Choice Act are essential to protecting workers' rights to form a union. Congress should pass it this session.

Information about the free events to commemorate the General Strike of 1934 can be found at <http://www.workdayminnesota.org>

Ad paid for by the International Brotherhood of Teamsters  
25 Louisiana Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20001 • 202-624-6011 • [www.teamster.org](http://www.teamster.org)

Please see Doug Loon's response to the ad [here](#).

### Beware of False Compromises on Card

## Check

On July 17, the *New York Times* reported that Senators working on a "compromise" version of the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) have decided to drop the card check provisions from the bill. The card check provisions would effectively eliminate the use of secret ballot elections from organizing campaigns. Instead, union organizers would be allowed to publicly pressure workers to sign cards with automatic certification being issued once more than 50% of workers signed.

While some have viewed this as a victory, **even an amended EFCA remains a significant threat to workers, employers and the economy.**

1. The "compromise" version of EFCA would **still include binding interest arbitration, giving government-appointed arbitrators the authority to dictate union contracts.** This would dramatically expand government's reach into the private sector, and let arbitrators impose wages, benefits, and work rules on private sector employers. Workers would be denied an opportunity to ratify their contracts as well — losing the ability to hold union bosses accountable for the promises they made to convince workers to join a union.
2. The "compromise" may include a **union access provision** — allowing union organizers right onto the worksite to pressure workers in break rooms and lunch rooms. This would go against more than 70 years of labor law.
3. The "compromise" would still impose **one-sided penalties only on employers**, with no new penalties to deter any union misconduct during organizing campaigns.
4. In exchange for dropping card check, Senators working on the "compromise" may require expedited elections — perhaps in as little as five days after the union asks for one. **This "quickie" election process would ensure that employers have no time to talk to their workers about unionizing**, and that the only information workers will get will come from the union.
5. **Card Check is likely to wind up in any final version of the bill.**

Andy Stern, president of the Service Employees International Union, has made it clear that unions will force card check provisions back into the legislation before it clears the Senate. On July 17, he said:

"The Employee Free Choice Act is going through the usual legislative process, and we expect a vote on a majority sign-up provision in the final bill or by amendment in both houses of Congress."

What this means is that proponents of the bill are willing to make any compromises necessary to get 60 votes so the bill can be brought to the Senate floor. Whether through amendments, a conference committee with the House of Representatives, or simple arm twisting, they will then make sure that card check is added back in. **Every Senator should know that a vote to bring EFCA to the floor is, in reality, a vote to abolish secret ballot elections.**

You are receiving this email because you recently joined the Minnesota Business Leaders coalition or you are a chamber or business association in Minnesota that may have interest in becoming active on this issue.

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