

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 September 21

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. Thanks to all of our members for joining 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

Staying Vigilant

While it isn't clear exactly what EFCA will look like when it eventually comes before Congress, what is clear is organized labor's continued insistence that this legislation will become law. Even with the health care debate far from over, and other large issues looming on the horizon, including cap-and-trade and reform of the financial regulatory system, labor leaders continue to push for passage of this cornerstone of their political agenda.

We will undoubtedly continue to hear rumors of pending changes to Card Check as organized labor continues to try and secure the bill's passage. As a result, it is important that Minnesota's business leaders continue to stay informed about developments surrounding the legislation. It will also be important for us to keep our colleagues and friends informed and let

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
 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

them know that their help will be needed when EFCA comes up for debate on Capitol Hill.

60 Votes in U.S. Senate?

Reports indicate that U.S. Senate Democrats will reclaim a 60-vote majority this week. On Thursday, the Governor of Massachusetts named a party official to fill the seat held by EFCA author Senator Edward Kennedy. At press time, an injunction has been filed against the Governor's appointment of Paul Kirk, a former Democratic party official and long-time friend to the late Senator Kennedy. While it remains unclear the outcome of the injunction, the appointment is fairly clear. Mr. Kirk is expected to hold the seat until MA conducts a special election on January 19. Meanwhile, the other 60th vote, Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia has been released from the hospital. That leaves a couple of Democratic Senators holding the keys to the future of EFCA. Stay tuned.

Last Week in Pittsburgh

Last week in Pittsburgh, the AFL-CIO gathered for its annual conference. Out of the conference came speculation that a "compromise" version of Card Check was imminent and that the Senate will pass Card Check before the end of the year. As members of Congress prepare for the midterm elections in 2010, the posturing around support of certain aspects of EFCA will only pick up steam.

In the September 17 edition of *The Wall Street Journal*, the editorial board penned "[A Gift for Labor: Union 'card-check' isn't dead yet and it may be getting worse](#)," which succinctly covered some of the challenges that organized labor will face in the coming months as they attempt to pass Card Check. In particular, talk of a compromise bill that would remove the card

Willmar Lakes Area Chamber
Winona Area Chamber
Worthington Area Chamber

Take Action Now!

Talk of action on EFCA commands that we continue to educate and let our individual voice be heard! To contact your elected officials:

1. Go to www.mnbusinessleaders.com.
2. Click on "Take Action Now!"
3. Send a message urging them to reconsider their stance on EFCA.
4. Pass the link on to your friends and colleagues.

MBL Resource Website

Visit the coalition's new website TODAY!

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.

check provision and instead insert fast-track elections and binding arbitration, is characterized as not being a sure thing to pass. That said, as negotiations and talk of compromise draw lawmakers closer to the midterm elections, business leaders need to stay prepared and informed.

Profiling Richard Trumka

In Saturday's edition of *The Wall Street Journal*, Matthew Kaminski of the *Journal's* editorial board interviews the newly elected president of the AFL-CIO, Richard Trumka. Central to the profile, "[What Labor Wants: The AFL-CIO's new president on card check, health reform and the challenges facing the union movement](#)" is Trumka's goal to bolster union ranks and broaden membership. EFCA plays a central role in accomplishing those goals.

Senate Democrats pull back on Specter's card-check prediction

The Hill
September 17, 2009
KEVIN BOGARDUS and J. TAYLOR RUSHING

Democratic senators on Wednesday downplayed Sen. Arlen Specter's (D-Pa.) prediction that the chamber would pass a contentious union-organizing bill this year, saying they are in the process of shoring up support for a compromise that is being hashed out.

Sen. Tom Carper (D-Del.), one of several negotiators working to reach agreement on a modified version of the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), also known as card-check, said they have made progress toward a deal but have yet to ink one.

» [Read the editorials](#)

Have you Joined the Virtual March against Card Check Yet?



Click on the image above to do so!

Minnesota Business Leaders: Your Go-To Resource

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Several Democrats on Wednesday confessed to knowing nothing about a proposed deal, and the party's top two leaders in the conference called the card-check proposal a work in progress.

"We have had real good discussions," Carper said. "As they say, frank and honest discussion. I think we have made real progress and narrowed somewhat of the differences between organized labor and the business community. We are not quite there yet. My hope is we will finish what we have started."

Specter on Tuesday told the AFL-CIO convention in Pittsburgh that senators "have pounded out an Employees Choice bill which will meet labor's objectives" and predicted it would pass before the end of this year. That set off a flurry of activity from lawmakers and union officials saying no agreement had been reached.

Carper said while negotiations over the bill have come closer to a "consensus approach," no deal has been brokered. Centrist Democrats, Carper said, have not been included in talks among negotiators so far.

"I don't think they know because they are not aware of the negotiations or where the middle ground lays," Carper said. "It just has not been roundly discussed. We will reconvene later this fall."

The Delaware senator indicated that there have been no formal talks on the union bill since July.

Asked about any deal on the bill, Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) said, "I'm not aware of any."

Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) said the

same, calling the issue "a work in progress" and saying he expects the Democrats' lead negotiator, Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), will inform Democrats when a deal is reached.

"It's been in progress for months," Durbin said. "I think if they ever reach common agreement, they'll notify us and then we will take it from there."

Centrist Democrats also said they were unaware of any agreement.

"Nothing final, to my knowledge, has been finalized, but I know members from both sides have been working on, I guess, a compromise," said Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-La.).

Sen. Kay Hagan (D-N.C.) was surprised to hear the issue was being revived. "From what I understood, the whole card-check issue was dead," Hagan said.

And Sen. Blanche Lincoln (D-Ark.), who faces reelection in 2010 and said earlier this year she would oppose the bill, said she is unaware of any changes. "I haven't heard or seen anything yet," Lincoln said.

What remains unclear is what a deal would look like.

Lawmakers have been discussing removing a contentious provision that would allow workers to bypass secret-ballot elections and unionize when a majority of them sign authorization cards. In his speech before the AFL-CIO, Specter suggested that another controversial measure that would force management and workers to negotiate union contracts quickly — termed binding arbitration — was included in the agreement.

"The bottom line is they have a deal," said a

Democratic lobbyist, but questions remain over the whip count.

With Sen. Edward Kennedy's (D-Mass.) death, there are 59 senators in the Democratic Conference, not enough to overcome a filibuster. Even if Lincoln votes for the bill, that's one short, and there have been discussions among lawmakers of reaching out to centrist Republican senators, such as Maine Sens. Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe, said the lobbyist.

Nevertheless, Democrats' best chance of passing the labor bill may have come last summer.

Last week, in a speech before labor activists on Capitol Hill, Harkin said he wanted to bring the bill to the floor in July but stopped when Kennedy could not come to Washington and vote due to illness.

Harkin said Wednesday he felt he was only close to a deal then and not completely there.

"I thought we were close to having an agreement that we could bring it out and vote on. Close — nothing's final until you bring it out," Harkin said.

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651.221.0850

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