



## Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association

### Free & Fair Union Elections

Enacted over 70 years ago, the National Labor Relations Act guarantees employees the right to determine whether they wish to be represented by a particular union through a secret ballot election. Under this law, the National Labor Relations Board protects the interests of both employers and employees by ensuring that both sides have an opportunity to make their case, and that employees are able to express their decision privately—the same opportunity afforded voters in a political election.

The Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association (AzHHA) strongly opposes H.R. 800 and S.1041, the Employee Free Choice Act of 2007, because the legislation seeks to overturn a bedrock principle of free and fair elections where ballots are cast in private, free from outside influences. These bills would enable union organizers to represent employees by presenting a majority of union authorization cards to the employer. For hospitals—where employees must work as a team to care for patients—secret ballot elections are essential.

Too often during a union campaign, hospital employees report feeling intimidated by union organizers and fellow staff who pressure them to sign union cards. Even employees who indicate they would not vote to unionize in a private election are reluctant to speak out publicly against unionization at a caucus or open forum and may sign cards just so union organizers will leave them alone.

Unfortunately, employees who refuse to sign union “cards of interest” report being bullied, belittled, or singled out as “non-team players.” In a hospital setting, where patients depend on employees to work as a team, such behavior could have serious consequences for patient safety.

Finally, in the fast-paced world of the modern hospital, busy healthcare professionals may not have time to read the “fine print” on cards of interest that indicate that the signed card can or will be used to demonstrate to management that a majority of employees are interested in being represented by a union. Moreover, not all cards of interest contain this information, nor do they include the pros and cons of unionization. Consequently, employees could easily find themselves with a union and not realize that the cards they signed a month earlier resulted in this outcome. By contrast, a secret ballot election allows for full disclosure of information from both management and the union, and allows each employee to make an informed decision.

Arizona hospitals believe that the men and women who care for patients are entitled to choice. They also must be guaranteed confidentiality in their decision to unionize or not to unionize. The proposed legislation strips them of the protections afforded under

current law and leaves them vulnerable to unwanted interference.

**AzHHA urges Arizona's congressional delegation to oppose H.R. 800 and S. 1041 and protect employees' right to confidentiality in unionization elections.**

