



For Immediate Release

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***ENZI: SENATE REPUBLICANS STAND UP FOR WORKER RIGHTS,
BLOCK DEMOCRAT EFFORT TO TRADE PRIVATE BALLOT FOR
POLITICAL GAIN***

Washington, D.C. –U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, said today the Senate turned back the most blatant attempt in history to strong arm working Americans into signing over their most fundamental right – the right to cast a private ballot when deciding whether to join a union – and rejected a bill that would overturn proven collective-bargaining methods and leave workers exposed to pressure, intimidation and coercion by co-workers and labor union leaders.

“Americans get a private ballot when they choose their President, their Congressmen, their local councilmen, even their PTA leaders – why should they not have the same right in the workplace when they decide whether to form a union? Free, fair, and private elections are a fundamental principle of American democracy,” Enzi said.

In a procedural vote today, supporters of the proposal failed to convince at least 60 Senators to vote for “cloture” – a threshold needed under Senate rules to stop unlimited debate on a bill or amendment and proceed to a final vote.

“This legislation was not about employees, nor was it about enhancing employee rights,” Enzi said. “It certainly had nothing to do with free choice either. Plain and simple, this bill was about unfairly and artificially boosting organized labor’s steadily declining membership at the expense of essential employee democratic rights. I am very pleased that Senate Republicans have stopped Democrats from giving union bosses this early Christmas present.”

The so-called “Employee Free Choice Act,” would not only require the imposition of a workplace union, based solely on signed authorization cards, it would radically alter the longstanding process of collective-bargaining and set aside proven and effective methods used to resolve differences between workers and employers. It also would end standards in place for over 70 years used to compensate parties who suffer a loss as a result of wrongful acts, by imposing unreasonable penalties on employers, while leaving penalties for union violations of employees’ rights at current levels – despite the

fact that there are an average of nearly 6,000 charges of harassment, intimidation, and coercion against unions each year.

“The right to a private ballot is one of the cornerstones of our democracy, and I am proud of my Republican colleagues for protecting that right,” Enzi said. “Working Americans deserve to choose what’s right for them in the workplace without fear, coercion or pressure and without having to publicly disclose or defend their views to hostile coworkers or unions. It would have been the height of hypocrisy and irresponsibility for members of Congress – all of whom were elected by private ballot – to strip away that fundamental right.”

Enzi said that the Republicans who opposed the so-called “Employee Free Choice Act” are far more in touch with most Americans than the Democrats who supported it. Recent polls show that American voters recognize what is at stake and overwhelmingly oppose the bill -

- 79 percent of voters oppose the so-called Employee Free Choice Act;
- 89 percent believe a worker’s vote on union organization should remain private;
- 78 percent of union workers favor keeping the current system of organizing in place.

“It is a shame that we had to dedicate so much of our valuable time on the Senate floor to legislation that was plainly designed to profit special interests at the cost of fundamental employee rights,” Enzi concluded. “I am glad that we have dispensed with this bill, and I look forward to moving on to matters of genuine substance and importance.”

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