



April 12, 2005

The Honorable Charles Norwood
United States House of Representatives
2452 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Norwood:

On behalf of the American Hospital Association (AHA) and our nearly 4,700 hospital and health care system members and 37,000 individual members, and the American Society for Healthcare Human Resources Administration (ASHHRA), an AHA personal membership group of health care human resources professionals, we are pleased to write in support of your legislation, H.R. 874, The Secret Ballot Protection Act.

America's hospitals believe in the right of individuals to collectively organize for purposes of union representation, but we believe that those elections must be fair and impartial. The Secret Ballot Protection Act will ensure that workers in an appropriate collective bargaining unit are able to cast their votes on unionization in private, free from undue pressure or influence.

The National Labor Relations Act sets forth a process to ensure that union elections are fair, free of fraud, and confidential. However, current law also permits employers and unions to bypass elections and agree to union recognition by use of "card check" procedures. "Card checks" force employees to declare their preference on a unionization vote in front of union organizers. Such a process invites coercion, intimidation and abuse. The National Labor Relations Board and the courts have acknowledged that the secret ballot is the "most satisfactory ... indeed the preferred method of determining whether a union has majority support." We believe that the legislation you have introduced will go a long way toward ensuring that the true interests of hospital employees and their wish to be represented – or not – by a labor union are upheld.

We look forward to working with you on this important legislation. Please feel free to contact me or AHA Senior Vice President Steve Ahnen at 202/626-2354 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Rick Pollack
Executive Vice President
American Hospital Association

Kathryn M. Fisk
President
American Society for Healthcare
Human Resources Administration