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February 12, 2007

Dear Representative:

I am writing on behalf of the American Hospital Association's (AHA) nearly 5,000 member hospitals and health systems to urge you to oppose legislation pending before your committee that would jeopardize our employees' right to confidentiality in unionization elections.

The bill, H.R. 800, the "Employee Free Choice Act" seeks to overturn a long-standing policy, established more than 70 years ago in the National Labor Relations Act that guarantees employees the right to determine whether they wish to be represented by a particular union through a secret ballot election. The bill would enable union organizers to represent employees by presenting a majority of union authorization cards to the employer.

This legislation undermines the bedrock principle of free and fair elections where ballots are cast in private and not in the shadow of outside influences and pressure. Under current law, the National Labor Relations Board protects the interests of both the employer and the employee by ensuring that both sides have an opportunity to make their case, and that those employees are able to express their decision in private. H.R. 800 would do away with that safeguard.

The hardworking men and women in our nations' hospitals are entitled to choice and this bill would strip employees of their working rights. Without the protection assured under the current federal law, workers would be vulnerable to unwanted interference or influences.

The AHA has long supported the compassionate work of the caregivers who work in our hospitals and are committed to providing them every protection afforded to them, including confidentiality in their decision to unionize. We oppose H.R. 800 as it seriously breaches this right and urge you to vote against the measure.

Sincerely,

Rick Pollack  
Executive Vice President

