

June 19, 2007

Dear Senator:

I am writing on behalf of the American Hospital Association's (AHA) nearly 5,000 member hospitals and health systems, and 37,000 individual members, to urge you to vote "no" on a motion to proceed to consider H.R. 800/S. 1041, a bill that will jeopardize our employees' right to confidentiality in unionization elections. The bill also denies workers the ability to vote on their contract by mandating government-imposed contract terms on private employers through binding arbitration.

The bill, the "Employee Free Choice Act," seeks to overturn a long-standing policy, established more than 70 years ago in the National Labor Relations Act, to guarantee employees the right to determine whether they wish to be represented by a particular union through a secret ballot election. If enacted, 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 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/S. 1041 would do away with that safeguard.

The mandatory binding arbitration provisions in the bill not only disrupt the careful balance established by our nation's labor laws, but they also deny workers the ability to vote on their contract. They further create disincentives to compromise. The incentive to reach agreement decreases if parties have reason to believe an arbitrator might be prevailed upon to select one proposal over another.

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 protections assured under the current federal law, workers would be vulnerable to unwanted interference or influences.



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Hospitals have long supported the compassionate 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/S. 1041 as it seriously breaches this right and urge you to vote "no" on the motion to proceed.

Sincerely,

Rick Pollack
Executive Vice President