



## E-NEWSLETTER

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### The Fight for Workplace Democracy Starts Now

Bipartisanship is certainly in vogue in Washington these days, with the incoming administration and leaders of the new, larger Democratic majorities in Congress pledging cooperation and a new era of pragmatic compromise. After the heavy-handedness of congressional Democrats these past two years, this change is certainly welcome. But the extent of their commitment to govern from the center will be put to the test early in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. However, the signals being sent regarding the undemocratic "card check" measure seem to indicate that Democrats are preparing for business as usual, putting their partisan policies and political special interests ahead of the interests of working families, entrepreneurial small businesses, and the American economy.

A quick primer: "card check" legislation – deceptively named the *Employee Free Choice Act* – would strip workers of the right to a secret ballot unionizing election. Workers would be asked to publicly sign a card indicating their support for a particular union. As soon as union bosses can secure 50 percent plus one of employees' signatures, by whatever means necessary, they are automatically recognized as the bargaining unit for that workplace.

The problems with this proposal don't stop there. If the union bosses, who have taken charge of this newly-formed bargaining unit, are not happy with the concessions they wring from employers within a short period at the bargaining table, the first contract is sent for mediation and, ultimately, binding arbitration.

The stakes in this debate could not be higher. In a time of economic turmoil, this legislation would exert tremendous pressure on job-creating

American businesses; worse, it would send a signal from Washington that increasing the clout of a Democratic special interest group is more important than spurring economic growth, creating jobs, or keeping American businesses competitive in a changing global economy.

Top union officials have all but demanded that Democrats in Congress bring this undemocratic measure to a vote within the first 100 days of the new administration, and liberal special interests have wasted no time gearing up to destroy the secret ballot in the workplace.

It's time to hold Democrats to account for their talk of bipartisanship and governing from the center. "Card check" legislation is nothing more than a special interest giveaway, and its enactment would set off a chain of anti-competitive changes to American enterprise that will wreak havoc on economic recovery. We need to fight to protect workplace democracy, and we need to start now.

### Financial Aid Simplification: More Than Just the Form

Beginning on January 1<sup>st</sup>, millions of American families will apply for college financial aid by filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). This annual ritual allows students to benefit from a wide range of federal financial assistance, not to mention state and institutional aid programs. In a maze of overlapping and redundant programs, the FAFSA is actually an innovation that has helped streamline the process for families and schools alike.

However, the form has been maligned in recent years because of its length (100+ questions) and its supposed complexity (the inclusion,

among other things, of tax information, which no one likes to calculate).

While critics are correct in pointing out that applying for financial aid could be easier, blaming the FAFSA misses the point entirely. The FAFSA isn't the source of complexity in financial aid – it's merely a symptom.

For all that was said and written about so-called financial aid simplification in the recently enacted renewal of the Higher Education Act, it would be disingenuous for us not to also point out that seven new questions must be added to the form this year because of new programs created by Congress.

It's time to get serious about financial aid simplification, and that means looking beyond the form to the maze of programs that have created this complexity in the first place. Several private sector groups have begun promising research in this area. Look for *true* financial aid simplification to be a top priority for Republicans in the future.

### Get Connected: New Online Resources

The internet is a powerful gateway to constituencies, coalitions, activists, friends, and the media. Through increased social networks and media, video outreach, and blogging, Committee Republicans intend on enthusiastically pursuing any who will listen to our message. Please join us on any of these new and growing online communities.

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