



## The Employee Free Choice Act: A Q&A For Employees

**What is the Employee Free Choice Act?** The Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), commonly called “card check,” is a legislative proposal that would require recognition of a union in the workplace if a simple majority (50% plus one) of employees sign union authorization cards. Under card check, there would be no secret-ballot vote on the union, as is the case under the current system. EFCA also allows government-appointed arbitrators to impose a binding contract on a company and its workers if the company and the union cannot reach agreement.

**What is an authorization card, and what does it mean if I sign one?** Today, signing an authorization card means you are interested in possibly joining or being represented by a union. However, the card is not your vote. Under current law, if you sign the card, you will have an opportunity to cast your vote for or against the union privately, in a secret-ballot election. However, under card check, signing an authorization card is your only “vote.” There will be no secret-ballot election to follow. If a simple majority (50% plus one) of workers sign the card, the union will be recognized as the official representative of all workers – even though some workers may never have been given an opportunity to sign or not sign a card.

**How is card check different from the current process used to authorize a union?** Under current law, a union must collect signed authorization cards from 30% of workers in order to call for an election. Then, all workers cast their votes in private to determine if the union will be recognized as workers’ representatives in a collective bargaining process. Card check bastardizes the union recognition process by allowing unions to be recognized after obtaining a simple majority (50% plus one) of signed authorization cards – without the traditional education and discussion period that helps workers evaluate the pros and cons of union representation. Because the authorization cards serve as the only “ballots,” there is no election and no private vote.

**If a union attempts to organize workers at the company where I work, will I be guaranteed a chance to make my voice heard and vote on the matter?** No. Under card check, there is no guarantee that all employees will be asked to sign an authorization card, and there will be no secret-ballot election. In fact, it’s possible that a union organizing effort could be underway without you knowing anything about it.

**Under card check, can I be forced to join or be represented by a union? If I don't get a chance to sign an authorization card or vote on union representation?**

Yes. If the union collects signed authorization cards from a simple majority of workers (50 percent plus one), the union must be recognized as the official representative of all workers in the appropriate unit – even if you and other coworkers were never asked to sign a card or given a chance to have your voice heard in any other way.

**Under card check, if contract negotiations break down and the government steps in, will workers have a chance to vote to accept or reject the terms of the government-imposed contract?**

No. If the company and the union cannot reach agreement on a contract, card check allows the government to step in and appoint an arbitration panel which will impose a binding contract that neither the company nor the workers can change for at least two years unless both the company and the union agree to a change.