

Why Are Workers the Only Group That Is Denied the ‘Right to Join’?

By Harry Kelber

The questions will not go away: ***Why are our workers the only group in America that don't have the right to join a union without serious personal risk?***

No matter what your occupation, you have the right to form or become a member of any organization—**as long as it's not a trade union!**

People join organizations because they think it's in their best interest to do so. That is even true of bankers and corporate executives. So why the furor from opposition groups when workers want to join a union because it offers them obvious advantages in wages and benefits?

Why would the U.S. Chamber of Commerce be willing to spend 50 million dollars for its new-found interest in safeguarding workplace democracy? All the raging controversy about card checks or secret-ballot votes would become meaningless if workers themselves were to freely decide whether or not they wished to join a labor organization.

We should not deride or dismiss pro-union workers as representing a “special interest” group that is asking for our favors. They are the lifeblood of our economy. They provide the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the fuel for our cars, the houses we live in and the countless necessities and conveniences we take for granted. Why should we deprive them of an important gateway to a middle-class existence? Why should we allow corporations and their obliging friends in Congress to deny them rights that all of us enjoy?

By using a variety of threats, including actual firings, the nation's corporations are doing everything possible to keep their employees from achieving collective bargaining strength. This is modern-style bondage and exploitation. Employers dominate their workers from the moment they enter the workplace to the moment they leave—and even beyond. It represents bare-faced greed that its perpetrators would like to go on forever—if they have their way.

The workers of today and the future need a new civil rights movement to liberate them from their entrapment. They are being subjected to flagrant discrimination that is not only immoral, but leaves millions of working families in a state of economic despair.

What are we willing to do to help them?