

the human spirit, no barriers to our progress except those we ourselves erect." Paul Weyrich did not believe in constraints or barriers. He was a man of the possible, a man of great passion and vision, who truly made a difference in the lives of the individual—fighting tirelessly for what he believed.

His tenacity, perseverance, and ideas have inspired many to become involved in the political process, here at home and abroad. The legacy he leaves is the belief that all have a stake and the ability to change things. . . that the true dynamic of political participation stems from citizen coalitions, not the rulings of elites. And that our principles can be successfully defended by those who live them regardless of the machinations of the left. For that he is owed much gratitude. Virginia and Ignatius can be proud; their son made the most of the talents entrusted him.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to a fellow patriot, Paul Weyrich, for his significant contributions to the conservative movement and for promoting traditional values and a democratic vision for the world. I also wish to express my profound sorrow of his passing, and my condolences to his family, friends and colleagues.

IN SUPPORT OF EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 22, 2009

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I would like to submit for the record a speech, titled "What Would Employee Free Choice Mean in the Workplace" given by Professor William B. Gould IV, Charles A. Beardley Professor of Law, Emeritus at Stanford Law School; Chairman of the National Labor Relations Board in the Clinton Administration (1994–1998); member of the National Academy of Arbitrators since 1970; Independent Monitor for Freedom of Association Complaints, First Group America, 2008, to the 58th Annual Conference of the Association of Labor Relations Agencies on July 20, 2009 in Oakland, California.

WHAT WOULD EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE MEAN IN THE WORKPLACE?

It is a pleasure to be with you here today. By my rough count, this is my third speech to this organization during the past couple of decades. I have enjoyed the chance to speak to and with you in the past and look forward to today's program. I am particularly pleased to renew my contact with Maria-Kate Dowling, Associate General Counsel of the National Mediation Board.

Kate was my Deputy Chief Counsel at the NLRB in 1997–98, one of the youngest women (perhaps the youngest) to ever hold that senior of a position. She is illustrative of the very best and brightest who should—and I believe now will—receive great recognition in Washington today.

I want to commend the Association of Labor Relations Agencies for holding this session here today on the practical implications of the Employee Free Choice Act. This significant legislative proposal warrants dispassionate examination in an arena which has been too frequently divided and polarized. My sense is that the bill even with proper amendments—and I am quite confident that if it is enacted it will be amend-

ed—will have a considerable impact on the workplace. EFCA and labor law reform contain some of the assumptions that I have held for more than four decades, i.e., that the Act is plagued with lethargic enforcement, creaky and convoluted administrative procedures and ineffective remedies, that it is not working well and that, as a result, some employees who wish to join unions are unable to do so. No one can say with certainty what the precise union membership impact of law reform will be, given the fact that so many other factors are responsible for the precipitous decline of trade unions. But it is safe to say that it is unlikely that any statutory reform in the foreseeable future can by itself accomplish the desirable objective of restoring the middle class—though its proponents so often claim it will!

The fundamental need for reform relates to the rule of law. The National Labor Relations Act, once considered a bedrock of labor rights of freedom of association, has not been performing as advertised. There is nothing terribly new about this story. The overriding theme is that justice is being denied through its delay! The loopholes, disproportionately exploited by employers, have dilated into a "black hole" in Washington headquarters where complaints can sit for more than five years while workers await reinstatement and back pay.

How can we properly address this? I think that the Employee Free Choice Act is right on the mark in establishing a treble damage award for back pay. For too long, an award of back pay minus interim earnings has been regarded by everyone involved on all sides as a "license fee" for employer misconduct because back pay is cheaper than a union contract.

EFCA also provides for fines up to \$20,000 for each employer violation as well as new contempt sanctions. And again, I think that the new law has it right in expanding and making more effective the Board's injunctive authority for employer unfair labor practices—in much the same manner that the statute has established them for union unfair labor practices since the Taft-Hartley amendments. Judge (and I hope soon-to-be Justice) Sonia Sotomayor's opinion in *Silverman v. Major League Baseball Player Relations Committee, Inc.* upholding my Board's view that an injunction was appropriate in the baseball players' 1994–95 strike has made this provision's importance about as well known as anything.

On other key issues I think that there is much more room for debate. While card checks are evidence of employee support in some circumstances, I think that they are, as the Supreme Court has characterized them, second best. And in Canada, where the consensus in the 1960s favored card check, a majority of provinces have now settled on secret ballot box elections. Moreover, there will be fewer disputes over the way in which employees mark secret ballots than there will be over cards; fewer disputes means less litigation and less delay.

But the unions are right to say that the election system (and indeed many other provisions of the statute) is broken. Accordingly, my view is that the principal breakdown in the election scheme—which has led to the card check proposal—is delay through which employees are subjected to a one-sided, anti-union campaign by employers for at least two months, and in a minority of instances a much more considerable period of time. The answer here is to both expedite elections—to require that they be held within a couple of weeks of the union's petition, as is done in the provinces of Ontario and British Columbia—and to reverse Supreme Court precedent excluding non-employee union organizers from company premises so

that they can carry their side of the message to employees more effectively in the run-up to the ballot itself.

Another reform can provide for postal ballots which give employees a greater opportunity to cast their vote privately in a neutral facility of their choosing outside of the employer's control. In truth, the statute already provides for this, as I noted in my concurring opinion in *San Diego Gas & Electric*—but I think that Congress can be helpful by explicitly providing that postal ballots can be available within the Board's discretion along the lines that I set forth in *San Diego Gas*. The plurality in that case, which limited such ballots only to cases where employees are scattered and unavailable, did not rely upon any provision of the statute as it is written today and the Board, as well as Congress, can reverse that poorly-reasoned opinion at any time that it wants.

The third important feature of EFCA provides for interest arbitration in first contract negotiations. Clearly, as Professors Ferguson and Kochan have established, there is a problem here—only 56% of newly-certified bargaining units reach a contract, and only 37% do so within the first certification year—that cannot be easily remedied by refusal-to-bargain litigation. The surface bargaining cases have not been an effective avenue through which to establish or restore collective bargaining relationships that should have been less dysfunctional in the first instance.

However, EFCA-sponsored interest arbitration, in contrast to the "grievance" or "rights" variety, is relatively untested in the private sector in the United States. In Canada, which has first contract arbitration in most provinces, the process is rare and used sparingly (except in Manitoba where it is automatic after a specific time period). The conundrum is that the potential for a mechanism like this must be available to rescue bargaining which is at a stall, and yet its mere availability can undermine the collective bargaining process itself which is furthered by the Act.

The proper approach here, it seems to me, is to provide that the mediator—perhaps in consultation with the NLRB itself—should certify after extensive mediatory efforts that collective bargaining is either at an impasse or dysfunctional. As it presently stands, EFCA simply allows for arbitration to be invoked after three months of collective bargaining and subsequent mediation. Not only is this period of time too abbreviated, but by spelling out a specific period of time after which arbitration is automatic, it encourages the parties to maneuver in anticipation of arbitration in a way which can erode the voluntary collective bargaining process. Moreover, this approach fails to take into account the fact that both sides are frequently learning for the first time as they put together their very first collective bargaining agreement.

Arbitration must be used sparingly, although it should remain available in the final analysis so as to shore up a relationship which might otherwise disappear. This must be what the law encourages not only because of the considerations above but also because experience with interest arbitration in the public sector—where it is available in many jurisdictions for police and fire—is itself extensive and time-consuming. Amongst the interest arbitrations that I have done was one between the Detroit Board of Education and the Federation of Teachers twenty years ago where hearings continued day and night for a week, detailed briefs were filed thereafter, and the arbitration