

EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT (EFCA)

FOR PEOPLE OF FAITH

REBUILDING A FAIR AND PROSPEROUS ECONOMY FOR ALL.

Special favor to the poor

God's concern for the poor is the 2nd most prominent theme in the Hebrew Scriptures next to idolatry.

In the New Testament, one out of every 16 verses is about the poor.

In the Gospels, one out of every 10 verses...

In the Book of James...One out of every five.

God as the first Worker

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude/ And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.”

Genesis 2:1-3

Moreover, that a man should eat and drink and enjoy himself, in return for all his labors, is a gift from God.”

Ecc. 3:13

Labor Unions have been an important vehicle to extend the notion of “Sabbath” in our society.

1940: 40 hr work week won by unions and became law of the land.

Mosaic Law: Work Relief for Poor

- Deuteronomy 24:19-22.
- Numbers 8:23-26.
- After their liberation from Egypt, Moses established economic rules for the people. Age limits were placed on laborers during the construction of the Tabernacle and retirement for all workers at 50 yrs old.

Scripture supports young and old:

- These Scriptures speak to the truth that in any society, it is children and the elderly who are most vulnerable to economic pressures. In 1820, half of all factory workers in the U.S. were children 11 yrs old or younger. It was Organized Labor along with religious congregations who helped pass the first laws against child labor. In terms of older workers, unions were the first organizations to fight for pensions and Social Security to protect retirees.

Jehoash: Good Boss

2 Kings

12:1-5

Jehoash is an example of a good king who implemented God's standard of labor relations. Jehoash instituted taxes for repairs in the Temple, but insured that the money was used to pay the workers fairly.

Not Paying Wages is a Sin!

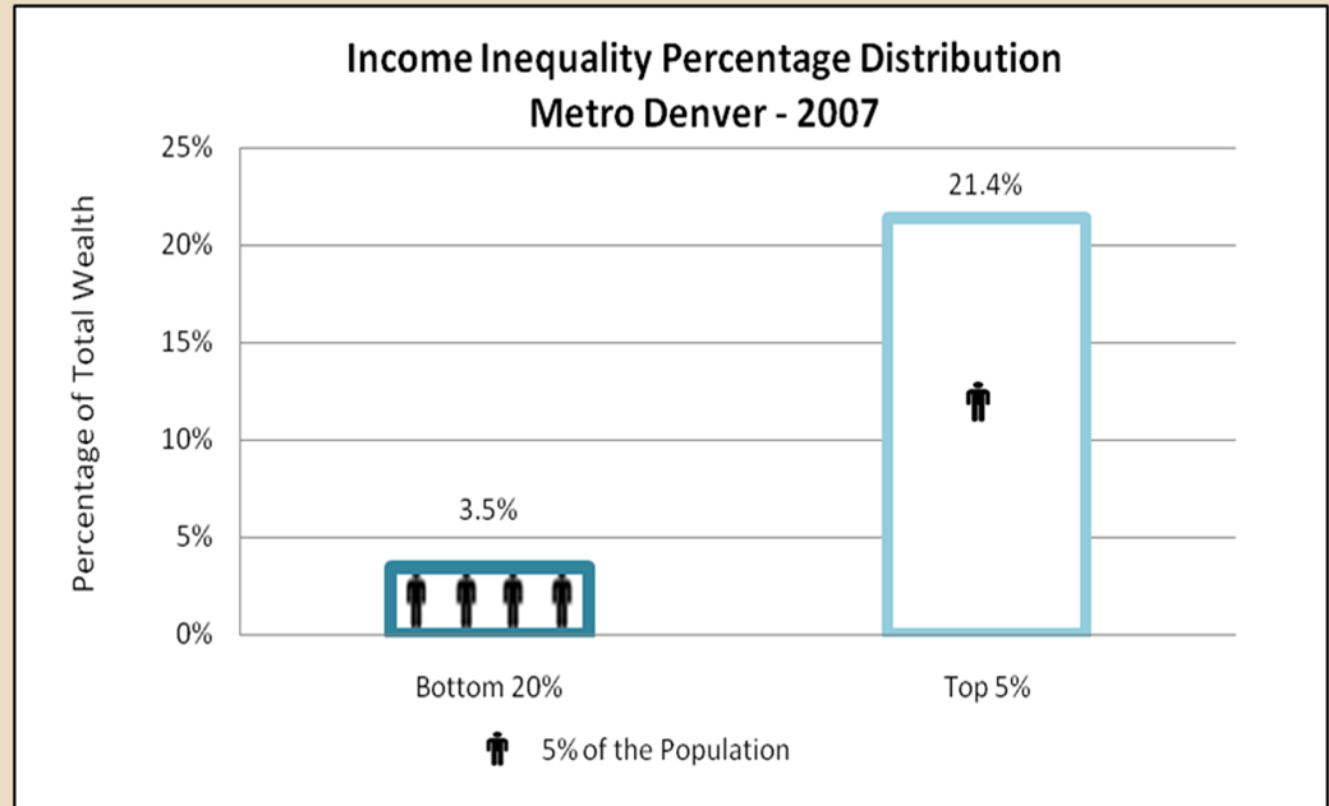
“You shall not withhold the wages of the poor and needy laborers, whether other Israelites or aliens who reside in your land in one of your towns. You shall pay them their wages daily before sunset, because they are poor and their livelihood depends on them; otherwise they might cry to the Lord and you would incur guilt.”

Deuteronomy 24:14-15

On December 9, 2008, Wal-Mart agreed to pay \$54 million to up to 100,000 workers in Minnesota who had been forced to work through lunch and rest breaks and worked off the clock.

Income Inequality in Denver

While the top 20 percent of households in Metro Denver held 48.7 percent income and the top 5 percent held 21.4 percent of households at the lowest quintile shared a mere 3.5 percent of the total pie.



Wealth Inequality

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven ... When the disciples heard this they were greatly astounded and said, “Then who can be saved?” But Jesus looked at them and said, “For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible.”

Matt. 19:23-26

- In U.S.: A mere 1% of the population owns 23% of the country’s wealth: highest inequality since 1928.
- Average U.S. CEO makes 360 times what the average worker makes

Why Unions

“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help ... a three-fold cord is not quickly broken.”

Ecc.4:9-10, 12b

Organized Labor

Facts about
Achievements of
Challenges to
Support of
Activity in Denver

Union Quality of Life

Union (U.S. Dep't of Labor, statistics)

- Men earn only 5% more than women.
- 59% more likely to have employer provided health coverage; 4 times as likely to have pensions
- 12% of American workforce is in a union...was 35% in the 1950's.
- Union members make 30% more than non-union workers

Non-Union

- Men earn 32% more than women.
 - Healthcare and pension plans less common
- Poll: 60 million workers say they would form a union if they could (2007 Peter D. Hart Research Associates Poll).

Organized Labor Achievements

- 1930s helped to pass: Social Security, the 8-hr work day with paid overtime, paid vacations, and pensions.
- Family Medical Leave Act
- Minimum Wage Increases
- Unionization raises wages for minority women more than education, seniority, and job training combined!

(Institute for Women's Policy Research).

Opposition to Organized Labor

- Every 23 minutes a US worker is fired or discriminated against for trying to form a union
- More than 20,000 workers were fired or victimized annually for union activity for the decade ending in 2003
- 32 million American workers lack legal protection to form unions and bargain collectively
- 80% of employers hire high-priced anti-union consultants and lawyers when faced with an organizing drive
- 91% of employers force employees to attend mandatory anti-union meetings on paid time
- (Center for Urban Economic Development, University of Illinois).

Joining a Union has become a Risk, not a right!

1. Labor law gives employers control over union elections.
2. The legal system designed to protect workers has no teeth.
3. Employer interference, reprisals and delaying tactics are at an all-time high.

Employer Interference

When employers are faced with an organizing drive:

- 30% of employers fire pro-union workers.
- 51% coerce workers into opposing unions with bribes or special favors.
- 49% threaten to close a worksite if union victorious.

Employee Free Choice Act

EFCA is bi-partisan legislation that is necessary b/c current legal penalties against Employers who violate the law are minimal.

Federal Legislation addressing the imbalance of power in the workplace:

- Strengthens penalties (fines up to \$20,000 per violation) for companies that illegally coerce or intimidate employees in an effort to prevent them from forming a union. Also requires Employers to pay 3x back pay to employees illegally fired during an organizing campaign.
- Brings in a neutral 3rd party to settle a contract when the company and a newly certified union cannot agree on a contract after 3 months
- Establishes majority sign-up, meaning that if a majority (51%) of the employees sign union authorization cards, validated by the NLRB, a company must recognize the union

EFCFA: provides a fair, efficient way to form a union

1. Gives workers the choice to form a union when a majority sign up.
 - ▣ Much faster process
 - ▣ Less coercion and harrassment
 - ▣ More democratic, empowers workers

Faith Support of EFCA

*Sign Postcard and/or handwritten letter asking for Colorado Senators to support EFCA.

*Sign up to receive updates about IWJ-CO.