



An Open Letter from 120 Colorado Religious Leaders and Seminarians in Support of the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA).

We, the undersigned religious leaders and representatives of various faith-based organizations, are deeply concerned about the pervasive violation of the rights of working people when they attempt to exercise their basic freedom to form unions and bargain collectively for a better life. Over the past 30 years, workers' living standards have declined in well-documented ways – stagnant or low pay, longer hours spent at work, unaffordable or no health care benefits, and unsafe working conditions. Increasing disparity of wealth seems to be the hallmark of our time, with the top 1% of wage earners in the U.S. now holding 23% of *all* income—the highest inequality in income since 1928.

U.S. labor law protects the legal right of workers to form unions, yet employers regularly and effectively block that right. Employer violations of workers' rights are routine and illegal firings of union supporters in labor organizing drives are at epidemic levels. According to the 2005 National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) annual report: 31,358 people -- or approximately one worker every 23 minutes -- received back pay because of illegal employer discrimination for activities legally protected by the National Labor Relations Act. But the perpetrating corporations often pay no effective penalty for engaging in such behavior.

This routine and flagrant violation of workers' rights has created a climate of fear and intimidation in the workplace. The results are that too many workers do not try to exercise their freedom for fear of losing their jobs.

America's faith traditions are nearly unanimous in support of the right of workers to organize, and by using sacred text and tradition, our faith communities have developed social statements supporting the freedom of workers to organize and collectively bargain for a shot at the American Dream.

The Employee Free Choice Act is the first step to fixing this badly broken system by strengthening penalties for companies that break the law by coercing or intimidating employees. It will also establish a third-party mediation process when employers and employees cannot agree on a first contract, and enable employees to form unions when a majority expresses their decision to do so by signing authorization cards. It makes real the principle that the free choice about whether to form unions should belong to workers *themselves* and not be dictated by management.

As religious leaders, we will continue to work to disseminate within our communities of faith this message: That the right of workers to freely organize their workplaces is required in a democracy, and families and communities are strengthened when workers can bargain for fair wages, adequate benefits, and safe working conditions.

Therefore, we, as leaders of faith communities that represent a broad spectrum of U.S. religious life, call upon our Colorado Senators and our Colorado Congressional representatives to strongly support the Employee Free Choice Act.

Please note: The congregations and/or organizations listed below are for identification purposes only. These signatures represent the position of the individual clergy and religious leaders who have signed on in support).

Sincerely,

Rev. Daniel Klawitter, FRESC for Good Jobs and Strong Communities, Denver.

Rabbi Joel R. Schwartzman, Congregation B'nai Chaim, Morrison, CO.

Rev. Linda Gertenbach, Peace with Justice Facilitator, Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Rev. Eunsang-Lee, Pastor, Warren United Methodist Church, Denver.

Anne Dunlap, M.Div., Pastor, Comunidad Liberación/Liberation Community, Denver.

Dr. Dana W. Wilbanks, Professor Emeritus of Christian Ethics, Iliff School of Theology.

Jeremy J. Shaver, M.Div., Executive Director, Interfaith Alliance of Colorado

Imam Abdur-Rahim Ali, Northeast Denver Islamic Center, Masjid Al Taqwah, CO.

Khalifa Habiba Kabir, Nur Ashki Jerrahi Sufi Order, Boulder Colorado

Rev. Doshin Michael Nelson, Integral Zen Sangha, Denver, CO

Laura J. Folkwein, M.Div/MSW, Executive Director, Urban Servant Corps, Member, Sixth Avenue United Church of Christ, Denver

Rev. Kristina Lizardy-Hajbi, Minority Student Specialist, Colorado College, Colorado Springs, CO

Rev. Judy Davis, Chaplain, Frasier Meadows Retirement Community, Boulder, CO. Sister Peg Maloney, *R.S.M.*, Religious Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Denver

Sister Anna Koop, Sisters of Loretto, Denver Catholic Worker

Rev. Martin Lally, Queen of Peace Catholic Church, Aurora, CO

Rev. Bert Chilson, Catholic Priest and Pastor, St. Therese Parish/ Aurora, Colorado

Rev. Thomas F. Lemos, C.S.C., Director, Holy Cross Novitiate, PO Box 749 Cascade, CO 80809

Sister Mary Alice Murphy, Sister Mary Alice Murphy Center, Ft. Collins, CO.

Rabbi Brian Field, Judaism Your Way, Denver

Rabbi Eliot J. Baskin, D. Min., Congregation Har Shalom, Durango, CO.

Rabbi Lewis Bogage, Temple Ohr Shalom, Grand Junction, CO

Rabbi Benjamin Arnold, Congregation Beth, Evergreen, CO

Rabbi Deborah Ruth Bronstein, Congregation Har HaShem, Boulder

Dr. Miguel A. De La Torre, Associate-Professor of Social Ethics, Iliff School of Theology

Edward P. Antonio, Associate Professor of Theology and Social Theory, Diversity Officer, Iliff School of Theology

Dr. Tink Tinker (*wazhazhe, Osage Nation*) Spiritual Director, Four Winds American Indian Council, Denver, Colorado and *Clifford Baldrige Professor of American Indian Cultures and Religious Traditions, Iliff School of Theology*

Jeffrey H. Mahan, Academic Vice President and Dean of Faculty, Professor of Ministry, Media and Culture, Iliff School of Theology, Denver, CO

Rev. Dr. Phil Campbell, Director of Ministry Studies, Director of the Justice and Peace Program, and Visiting Assistant Professor of Leadership and Congregational Studies

Iliff School of Theology

Dr. Pamela Eisenbaum, Associate Professor of Biblical Studies and Christian Origins, Iliff School of Theology

Dr. John D. Spangler, retired Associate Professor of Pastoral Care and Psychology of Religion, The Iliff School of Theology

Bishop Elaine Stanovsky, Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church

Rev. Youngsook Kang, District Superintendent, Metropolitan District of the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Rev. Terri Todd, Parker United Methodist Church, Parker, CO.

Rev. Dr. Marti Zimmerman, Senior Pastor, Smoky Hill United Methodist Church, Centennial, CO.

Rev. Paul J. Kottke, Senior Pastor, University Park UMC, Denver

Rev. Michael D. Dent, Senior Pastor, Trinity United Methodist Church

Rev. George E. Dunn, LCSW, St. Andrew United Methodist Church, Highlands Ranch, Colorado

Rev. Julie Todd, United Methodist Clergy, CO.

Rev. Bradley Laurvick, Associate Minister, St. Luke's United Methodist Church, Highlands Ranch, CO

William R. Morris, Pastor, Burns Memorial United Methodist Church, Aurora, CO

The Rev. Dr. Patrick R. Bruns, Senior Pastor, Brentwood United Methodist Church Denver, CO

Rev. Earl K. Hanna, UMC Minister, Retired, University Park UMC, Denver

Rev. Robert E. Hunter, retired UMC Clergy, University Park United Methodist Church, Denver

Rev. Pam Everhart, Associate Pastor, First UMC, Fort Collins, CO

Rev. Todd Everhart, Pastor, Rinn United Methodist Church, Frederick, Colorado

Rev. Marla F. Kauerz, Retired Ordained Deacon, Englewood United Methodist Church.

Rev. Miriam H. Slejko, Trinity United Methodist Church, Denver CO

Rev. Linda C. Marshall, Minister of Nurture, Trinity United Methodist Church, Denver.

Peg Newell, Pastor, First United Methodist Church of Aurora

Rev. Jessica Rooks, Minister, Lamar United Methodist Church, Lamar, CO

Rev. Dr. Betty Bradford, Highlands UMC, CO.

Rev. Mike Bergman, pastor at Montclair UMC and Alameda Heights UMC, Denver

Rev. Roger Wolsey, Director, Wesley Foundation at CU – Boulder, Boulder, CO 80302

Rev. Russell Butler, co-pastor, Arvada United Methodist Church

Rev. Kerry Greenhill, Associate Pastor, Highlands & Montclair United Methodist Churches

Rev. Yvonne Lee, Pastor of Evanston United Methodist Church, Denver

Rev. Keith Thompson, First United Methodist, Boulder, CO

Dr. Melanie Rosa, Senior Pastor, Lakewood United Methodist Church

Rev. Sandra L. Spahr, Wesley United Methodist Church, Pueblo, CO

Rev. Kim James, Wesley United Methodist church, Pueblo, Co

Rev. Nancy F. Boswell, Senior Pastor, Christ United Methodist Church, Fort Collins, Colorado

Rev. MaryEtta Moore, United Methodist, retired, Pierce, CO.

Rev. Ted Fritschel, Th.D. (ret.). Member: St. Paul Lutheran, Denver; Exec. Committee Colorado State Democratic Party

Rev. Bonita Bock, Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Denver

Rev. Jay McDivitt, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Denver

Pastor Matthew Bolz-Weber, Holy Love Lutheran Church, Aurora, CO

Rev. Nadia Bolz-Webber, House for All Sinners and Saints, Denver, CO

Rev. Inga Oyan Longbrake, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, ELCA, Aurora, CO

Rev. Delores Shortridge, Priest, Our Merciful Savior Episcopal Church, Denver

Fr. Bret B. Hays, Curate, Saint John's Cathedral, Denver, CO.

Mark Meeks, Minister, Capitol Heights Presbyterian Church, Denver

The Rev. Dr. Larry Grimm, Parish Associate, Capitol Heights Presbyterian Church

The Rev. Warren Rempel, Retired Presbyterian Minister, Presbytery of Denver

The Rev. Larry Angus, Retired Presbyterian Minister, Presbytery of Denver

Rev. Dr. Humberto Castro, Iglesia Presbiteriana Hispana, Pueblo, CO

Rev. Malcolm Himschoot, United Church of Christ, Colorado

Rev. Paul Ramsey, Pastor, Mayflower Congregation Church, UCC, Englewood, CO

The Rev. Hal Chorpenning, Senior Minister, Plymouth Congregational UCC, Ft. Collins, CO

Rev. Patrick L. Demmer, Graham Memorial Community Church Of God In Christ, Denver

Robert E. Woolfolk, MA, DHL, Senior Pastor, Agape Christian Church, Denver

Dr. Bishop Gary D. Mosley, Liberty Christian Center Church, Denver.

Rev. Dr. Vernon Rempel, lead pastor, First Mennonite Church of Denver

Karen Cox, Pastor, Boulder Mennonite Church, Boulder, CO

Rev. Marilyn Miller, Boulder Mennonite Church

Gail Erisman Valeta, Church of the Brethren Clergyperson, Littleton, CO

Rev. Craig Peterson, United Church of Christ, Aurora.

Rev. Dr. Peter Terpenning, Pastor at the Community United Church of Christ

Dr. Robert Shellenberger, Chair of Peace, Liberty, and Justice Task Force of Jefferson Unitarian Church, Denver.

Seminarians from Iliff School of Theology, Denver, CO.

Tiffany Baker, United Methodist

Kevin Hall, United Methodist

Glenn Gillane-Duggin, United Methodist

Eric Strader, United Methodist

Julie Schubring, United Methodist

Amy Strader, United Methodist

Tyler Amundson, United Methodist

Erin Laurvick, United Methodist

Rev. Avery Sledge, Rinn United Methodist

Morita Truman, St. Francis UMC

Caitlin Trussell, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Nancy Rosas, United Church of Christ

Joshua Whistler, United Church of Christ

Russell Stewart, United Methodist

Gretchen Haley, Unitarian-Universalist

Rev. Greta Leach, North Platte First UMC

Jennifer Forker, Unitarian Universalist

Jamie Kepros, United Church of Christ

David E. Cooper, United Church of Christ

Megan Espenshade Vinande, United Methodist

Heather Cameron, Presbyterian

Kenneth Ingram, United Church of Christ

Jeannie Hufstedler, Unitarian-Universalist

Susan McKee, Episcopalian

Linda Brown, Episcopalian

Brett Stanislao, United Methodist

Nancy Niero, United Church of Christ

John Paul Richardson, United Church of Christ

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