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QuickPoint! – “Worker’s Choice” Would End the Unions’ “Forced-Rider” Problem

By Kathryn Hickok and Steve Buckstein

This is [National Employee Freedom Week](#) (August 20-26), a national effort to inform union members about their freedom to opt out of union membership if they choose and to make decisions about labor representation and the use of their union dues.

National Employee Freedom Week (NEFW) conducts [surveys](#) of union members and households. One significant finding is that a strong majority of union members nationwide agree that if members opt out of paying union dues and fees, they should represent themselves in negotiations with employers. Union leaders argue labor laws require them to continue representing workers even after they stop paying dues. “[Worker’s Choice](#)” would end this so-called free-rider problem (which is really a [forced-rider problem](#)).

[The Mackinac Center for Public Policy explains](#): “Without requiring a complete overhaul of collective bargaining laws, [Worker’s Choice] can free unions from having to provide services to employees who do not support them, and allow individual employees to represent themselves and negotiate independently with their employers.”

According to the NEFW survey, two-thirds (66.9%) of [Oregon union members agree](#) that workers should be able to represent themselves, and they don’t want to force unions to represent non-dues payers. It remains for future court decisions, or other political efforts, to end union compulsion in Oregon. Until that happens, Worker’s Choice should continue to be brought to the attention of union members and the public.

Kathryn Hickok is Publications Director and Steve Buckstein is Senior Policy Analyst and Founder at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon’s free market public policy research organization.