

# **EDITORIAL: 'Card check' bill**

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During the congressional campaigns of 2006, Democratic candidates hammered at a Republican "culture of corruption" personified by disgraced lobbyist Jack Abramoff and the everything-for-sale politics of House Majority Leader Tom DeLay. Democrats succeeded in convincing Americans that they would be less beholden to special interests if entrusted with control of Congress.

So what are Americans to make of Democrats' persistent efforts to reward their union constituents with legislation the party itself doesn't believe in?

On Tuesday, Senate Republicans succeeded in blocking a vote on the so-called "Employee Free Choice Act," which would force employers to recognize a union on a card count, thereby giving labor groups nearly unlimited license to intimidate workers until a majority sign cards agreeing to support organization. Although the bill lacks support in the upper house and faces a certain veto from President Bush if it were ever passed, Democrats were quick to criticize Republicans for siding with "big business" over "working families."

In fact, that mischaracterizes the Employee Free Choice Act. It would all but do away with the secret ballot in unionization efforts, allowing labor to send its legions door to door, reminding prospective members in person -- repeatedly -- that it's in their best interests to sign the card. Never mind that secret ballots strike a balance between employer and employee concerns of fairness, and that unions can still win secret ballots handily -- witness the May vote by Wynn Las Vegas dealers to join the Transportation Workers of America.

Democrats' opposition to secret ballots in union elections is curious considering the party used just such a process to select its leaders at the beginning of this year's session.

And it's even more puzzling based on their January introduction of a bill that outlined U.S. government support for building democracies abroad through "the right to free, fair, and open elections, secret balloting, and universal suffrage."

Democrats are guilty here of the same kind of water-carrying they accused Republicans of doing in years past. Rather than concern themselves with how their votes might affect common citizens prospering in non-union environments, Democratic senators and representatives are focused exclusively on rewarding organized labor and locking up union support for next year's election.

Senate Republicans did American workers a favor by keeping this legislation from a floor vote.