



## **An Open Letter from Colorado Religious Leaders 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 one worker every 17 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.

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

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

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

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

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. Malcolm Himschoot, United Church of Christ, Colorado

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

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

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