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Businesses beware the union agenda

While the primary races are history, our eyes are focused squarely on the general election in November. It is imperative that we do our due diligence on issues and the potential consequences of those issues.

One disconcerting challenge that lies before us is the increasing power of the big labor agenda and its effect on an already fragile U.S. economy. Already we are seeing proposed legislation and listening to political speeches that will result in new and costly regulations for business.

EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT Last year, chambers of commerce and trade organizations banded together to help fight off the card check effort deceptively known as the Employee Free Choice Act. Although we were successful initially, nobody believed the fight was over. Sure enough, this effort is at the top of the union agenda.

The card check act would eliminate secret ballot elections for unionizing efforts. Now, unions would have to gather signatures from at least 30 percent of



Sharon Powers

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the workers at a business. The union would then petition the National Labor Relations Board to hold a secret ballot election after workers heard from both the union and employer. If more than half the employees voted in favor, the union would be certified.

If the Employee Free Choice Act passes, the certification process is short-circuited.

Once the union organizers "persuade" more than half the workers to sign cards, the union would be certified. Under the card check bill, once the union is certified, the employers would be under a strict deadline to accommodate union demands. If the business did not meet the deadline, then the government would send in an arbitrator who would dictate the terms of the contract.

MINI UNIONS

While the card check act is of major concern, the labor agenda is also pushing for the establishment of mini unions. For example, if your business is not unionized, representatives can come in and sign up a handful of employees and then you'll find yourself with a union even if the number of workers that signed does not represent a majority.

OTHER ITEMS ON THEIR AGENDA

There is a movement to expand the Family and Medical Leave Act to include paid leave, decrease the size parameters so that smaller companies are included, and add more types of leave.

Add to that the push to mandate paid sick days for all employees, including part time and seasonal, and mandated health care regardless of the ability for a company to pay.

Add these proposed legislative policies together and we see an organized affront to America's business model and an organized threat to the viability of the U.S. economy.

America has grown powerful using a free-enterprise system. Entrepreneurs have worked hard and risked much to start and expand businesses that make our local economies strong as well as provide jobs



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for our citizens. In many cases, these small companies have flourished into the large corporations we see today. Business owners or chief executive officers, whether for a small companies or large ones, work long after the last employee has gone home to remain competitive through continual product research and development, analyzing ways to cut costs in order to keep their workers employed, provide health benefits that continue to rise double digits each year, and are constantly bombarded by both government and organized labor efforts that threaten their livelihood.

Unions have played a significant role in safety and fair treatment of employees in the workplace, especially decades ago before the passage of protections such as labor laws, the Employee Retirement Income Security Act, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations. They have amassed huge war chests and are funding political campaigns, lobbying to pass anti-business legislation, and threatening the foundation of our free enterprise system. In fact, in the last two elections, unions spent a combined \$560 million to help elect anti-business candidates.

Their agenda is troubling and it will not only be bad for business but detrimental to workers and our country.

Sharon Powers is president and CEO of the North Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce.