

Employers Brace for Aggressive Union Organizing as Sen. Barack Obama Clinches Democratic Nomination

NEW YORK, June 10 /PRNewswire/ -- As Senator Barack Obama secured the delegates to become the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee this past week, employers should be braced for a possible dramatic change in the labor landscape. Speaking via satellite to the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) convention taking place in Puerto Rico, Sen. Obama vowed to stand by re-elected SEIU president Andy Stern and union members by ushering in a union- friendly administration. He also vowed to pass the Employee Free Choice Act if elected to presidential office.

The so-called Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) would grant unions certification as soon as they had collected signature cards from half the workers, effectively stripping workers of their right to vote in a government supervised secret ballot election. EFCA would also impose substantial fines for employers' mistakes, as well as force first contracts determined by a third party arbitrator, even if the employer and the union both might disagree with the mandated final contract terms.

The SEIU, one of the largest and most powerful unions, has been campaigning aggressively in support of EFCA and plans to spend \$75 million on federal and state elections in the current two-year political cycle. Part of this plan includes aggressively pressuring or punishing political candidates who fail to follow through on pro-union vows after being elected.

"Employers across all industries must prepare for extremely aggressive union organizing campaigns that will be waged on a national scale," says Michael J. Lotito, a recognized workplace law expert and partner at the national employment law firm, Jackson Lewis LLP. "In fact Anna Burger, Secretary-Treasurer of the SEIU, predicts that the labor movement will add 1 million members per year if EFCA becomes law."

The convention established a new direction for the SEIU, voting to fund international, industry-specific campaigns over the traditionally favored local initiatives.

"With its new plans for consolidating power, the SEIU's leadership will effectively be able to dictate who will be targeted for corporate campaigns, how long they will last, and the terms under which they will end. The time for employers to define themselves positively before the union defines them negatively is now," says Philip B. Rosen, managing partner and chair of the Jackson Lewis LLP Labor Practice Group.

About Jackson Lewis LLP

Founded in 1958, Jackson Lewis LLP is dedicated to representing management exclusively in workplace law. With offices in 37 cities and 500 attorneys, Jackson Lewis has developed a specialized expertise in every aspect of employment, labor, benefits and immigration law. Additional information about Jackson Lewis LLP can be found at www.jacksonlewis.com.

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