

We need the

Employee FREE CHOICE ACT NOW!

Oponents of the Employee Free Choice Act like to claim that majority sign up would enable union organizers to force unwilling workers sign up against their will.

Of course, that charge is simply not true. Just ask any one of the more than 200 former AT&T Wireless workers in Ridgeland, Mississippi, who began organizing themselves right after their company, then known as AT&T Wireless, merged with Cingular (now AT&T Mobility) in early 2005.

Within three weeks of the merger, the customer care representatives — working together — demonstrated their strong support for union representation by gathering 207 signatures, a majority of the center's 324-person workforce.

The Mississippi workers eagerly signed up, because they knew that Cingular had reached an agreement with CWA to accept majority signup, respect workers' organizing rights and remain neutral during organizing campaigns.

"The idea that anyone forced us to sign union cards is crazy," said Kelvin Banks, one of the lead inside organizers at the facility and now an executive board member of Local 3511. "We wanted a union for a long time, but we knew that trying to forming a union at the old AT&T Wireless would have been tough, if not impossible. They were bitterly anti-union," he said.

There was no pressure to support the union, said Banks. "The decision to sign up was up to each of us. It was

'The Idea that Anyone Forced Us to Sign Union Cards is Crazy'



Workers at AT&T Wireless jumped at the chance of having a union voice when their company was bought by Cingular (now AT&T Mobility) in 2005. Within weeks of the merger, a majority of the workers organized themselves by signing a petition for a union. Kelvin Banks, left, now is an executive board member of Local 3511.

our choice. If we wanted a union we went over to a coworker's apartment to sign up. Those who didn't want a union didn't go," he said.

The issues for the Mississippi workers weren't much different from those experienced by thousands of customer service workers everyday. Under AT&T Wireless management, workers were terminated without just cause and without due process rights. Raises, if any, were determined subjectively and for arbitrary reasons. Health care and other benefits were poor or non-existent.

Banks and his co-workers were the first of more than 20,000 AT&T Wireless workers who have joined CWA through majority sign up. CWA now represents more than 42,000 workers at AT&T Mobility.

Current labor law allows management to decide if it wants to accept majority sign up, as most employers did prior to 1970, or force an election. The Employee Free Choice Act will give workers the same choice and options that management bosses currently enjoy.