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Congressional Forum on the Employee Free Choice Act
Trenton, NJ
June 27, 2005**

My name is Carol Muller. I am a registered nurse at Virtua West Jersey Hospital in Vorhees, New Jersey.

In 1996, my coworkers and I decided to form a union with JNESO because the hospital was eliminating positions, taking away extra pay, increasing our health care premiums, and had not given us a raise in three years. Due to the staffing cuts, the nurses were becoming concerned about the quality of care as we were being asked to take care of more and more patients.

When we began organizing our union, the hospital started an anti-union campaign. We received volumes of anti-union letters and leaflets. Nurses were pulled off patient care time to attend mandatory anti-union meetings. Several of my co-workers were fired.

Despite the hospital's campaign of intimidation, we won our union election in April of 1996. Unfortunately, the hospital refused to accept our decision and challenged the election. The legal challenges took two years to resolve and went all the way to the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, which denied the hospitals objections and certified the results of our union election.

After waiting two years for our right to a union to be recognized we were anxious to begin negotiations on our first contract. Unfortunately again, despite the courts ruling, the hospital continued to obstruct our rights by refusing to bargain in good faith. During the first contract campaign, the hospital fired four nurses. The National Labor Relations Board issued six complaints against the hospital, but that did not force them to the table.

Eventually, the nurses were forced to vote to authorize a strike. In 2000, four and a half years after we voted to form our union, we finally were able to negotiate our first contract. We won raises and a pension and most importantly a voice in our work rules. I am disgusted that in this day and age and in this country, workers like me have to face such harassment and intimidation when exercising their legally protected rights. No one should have to endure threats to their livelihood and their family's wellbeing. No one should have to wait four and a half years to have their choice recognized.

As members of Congress, imagine not being able to take office for four years because your opponent challenged the results of your election. You would not stand for it and neither should we.

I hope you all will support workers struggling to form unions in New Jersey and around our country and fight in Congress for a more fair process.

Thank you.