



# In Support of the Employee Free Choice Act

*An Islamic Perspective by Imam Mahdi Bray and Hussam Ayloush*

A central theme that permeates both the text of the *Qur'an* and the injunctions of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Unto Him) in the *Hadith* is the concept of justice (in Arabic, *Adl*).

For Muslims, justice is an integral and indispensable part of all human relationships, including those within the workplace, and between employers and workers. This concept of justice means fairness, balance, and reciprocal respect for the dignity and rights of owners, managers, and employees. One of these rights is the right of free association for the protection of the dignity and economic well-being of working people.

All too often, modern industrial societies frequently tolerate actions of managers and owners that seek to limit the right of workers to organize. When working people attempt to form legitimate and lawful unions for the protection of their rights and to insure that they receive living wages, owners and managers sometimes attempt to limit their right to organize, or even to employ extra-legal means, including intimidation, spreading false and negative information about unions, and use of the threat of firing, to stop union representation in the workplace. These actions do not encourage either justice or fairness for the working people whose labor these companies, and our entire society, depend on.

As Muslims, we recognize the legitimacy of private ownership. But Islam also promotes open and free consultation (in Arabic, *as-Shura*) among interested parties in a place of employment, and the freedom of legitimate association in the workplace. Workers who demand the right to their free association with labor unions operate not only within the parameters of American law, but also within the boundaries of the Islamic concept of justice.

Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Unto Him) enjoined owners, in the spirit of fairness and justice, to “pay the worker while the sweat is still on his brow.” The major premise of the Employee Free Choice Act is to safeguard the right of working people to receive that timely pay, as well as the other rights and benefits that have come from the struggle of organized labor to represent the interest of the working class of the United States.

We therefore believe that the passage of this proposed legislation will be a major step toward insuring justice for working people by protecting the right of workers to join unions. This protection is part of our moral commitment to justice, and to our calling, as Muslims, to work for economic and social justice for all people in society.

O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor....  
—Holy Qur'an 4:135



*Imam Mahdi Bray,  
Muslim American  
Society Freedom  
Foundation*

*Hussam Ayloush,  
Council on  
American-Islamic  
Relations*