

Enid News and Eagle

Farmer's Burden

May 14, 2009

U.S. Rep. Frank Lucas says the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) — also known as card check legislation — will be damaging to America's farmers and ranchers and could have a bad effect rural economies.

Lucas, the ranking Republican member, held a press conference Thursday and was joined by several of his colleagues in the House and other interested parties in the effects the legislation will have on the agriculture community.

The EFCA is more widely known as "card check" legislation because it would replace federally-supervised secret ballot elections with a public authorization card sign-up process.

"This legislation would create an environment where disruptions in the supply chain would happen frequently causing greater costs for our farmers and essentially stopping the movement of product from the farm to the table. This legislation is government's way of piling another burden on American farmers," Lucas said.

Republican Conference Chairman Mike Pence added, "Card check legislation creates an environment where workers are denied privacy, forced to vote in an atmosphere of intimidation and drives democracy from the workplace. It will devastate economic growth and job creation in the agriculture industry and we must not allow it to become law."

"Card check is not a solution for American farmers and California agriculture communities facing double digit unemployment. At a time when families are struggling to pay the bills and worrying about their next paycheck, now is the time to come together and defend an American worker's right to a private ballot and protect American jobs," stated Republican Chief Deputy Whip Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.).

"Passage of card check is bad for U.S. business in general, but it would have an especially negative impact on U.S. agriculture. Given the daily struggle many of our agricultural operations face during this economic crisis, agriculture can ill afford this legislation, commented Chuck Conner, President and CEO of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives.

"I strongly support a worker's right to a secret ballot, the most basic right of our democracy. I also strongly support the process of workers and their employers negotiating in good faith for wages and work conditions that they know and understand best. This is bad legislation and an insult to our democratic principles. This bill should not be allowed to see the light of day," added California producer Steve Patricio.