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National anti-union group dogs Merkley

A well-funded anti-union group continues to target U.S. Senate candidate Jeff Merkley because of his strong ties to the union movement and his support for labor's top priority in Congress, the Employee Free Choice Act.

The group, the Employee Freedom Action Committee, has begun running anti-Merkley ads on Portland area television stations, and dogging the candidate at campaign events around the state with a costumed "Grim Reaper," holding a placard warning of the death of democracy. Employee Freedom Action Committee and a related group, Center for Union Facts, were set up by corporate lobbyist Rick Berman, whose trademark is setting up deceptively named front groups.

"These people make absolutely no sense," said Merkley spokesperson Matt Canter. "By giving workers the right to organize and enabling better paying jobs with better benefits, we are strengthening America's democracy," Canter said, not "killing" it.

The Employee Free Choice Act would make it easier for nonunion workers to join a union and get a first

union contract, and would penalize employers who surveil, interrogate, discipline or terminate employees for supporting a union drive.

Business opponents of the Employee Free Choice Act have tried to discredit the bill by focusing on one aspect — it would replace the current process of workplace elections with a method for automatic union recognition once the majority of workers sign cards in support of union representation. Thus the Employee Freedom Action Committee says the bill would "strip workers of their right to a government-supervised private ballot vote."

The group attacked Merkley in May with print ads in several of the state's largest newspapers. In July and August it was back with a television ad.

"Some union bosses and their politician friends want to effectively do away with privacy when it comes to voting on joining a union," says a voiceover accompanied by ominous music and images. "Employees could

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Labor Day Greetings

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