



Labor Organizing Changes Should Trigger Internal Policy Review

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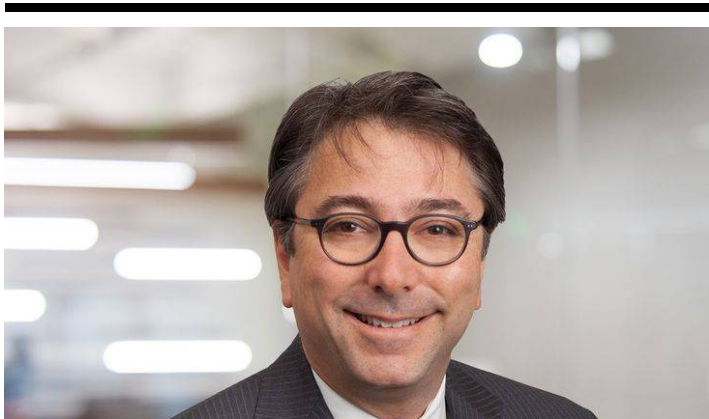
Responding to the decline of labor unions over the past 30 years, they attempted to change federal law to do away with secret ballot elections. Union leaders prefer the "card check" process in which organizers persuade employees to sign cards stating they want representation. When the effort to substitute the card check for secret ballot was defeated in 2010, the unions set their sights on Plan B: administrative rulemaking designed to expedite the election process.

Late last year the unions got their wish, The National Labor relations Board, as reconstituted by President Barack Obama, passed first-ever rules reducing the time period between representation petitions and elections from an average of 38 days to 20 or fewer. Just months before, the NLRB had imposed a first-ever, notice-posting requirement designed to educate employees about their right to engage in organizing activities.

As the field tilts in favor of organized labor, unions will enjoy a distinct advantage – unless employers are proactive. To ensure their employees go into the union-organizing process with the information they need, employers would be wise to start taking a critical look at employee-relations programs now. If they move quickly, they will be good to go once the new rules take effect. With increased organizing activity all but assured under the new frame-work, the clock is ticking on getting these programs up to speed. It's time to overhaul your program before the NLRB overhauls the law.

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