

# 'The Cringe Is Not a Winning Posture'

## *Republican Leaders' Timidity Harms Pro-Right to Work Candidates*

In the 1994 mid-term elections, GOP candidates gained a walloping 52 U.S. House seats and eight U.S. Senate seats.

Today political analysts from both major parties agree that the Republicans were able to make such sweeping gains 12 years ago only because they confronted then-President Bill Clinton time and time again on matters of principle.

Every single Republican in Congress voted against the Clinton tax hike of 1993.

### **Strategy of Confrontation Helped Right to Work Cause**

And 90% of Republicans voted against the pro-forced unionism "Striker Replacement" Bill backed by Mr. Clinton and Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.).

Although the tax hike was enacted and the strike bill easily passed the House, the GOP confrontations with Mr. Clinton on cutting issues like Right to Work hurt pro-forced unionism politicians.

As Mr. Clinton himself has conceded, votes like these actually had devastating electoral consequences for Big Labor Democrats.

After the 1993-94 confrontations over issues such as the Kennedy strike bill ushered in a GOP-controlled Congress, pro-Right to Work Americans were eager to continue the battle against compulsory

unionism.

In the Senate, then GOP Majority Leader Trent Lott (Miss.) held the first-ever vote on national Right to Work legislation in July 1996.

As expected, Big Labor defeated the bill with every Democratic member voting against it.

But in that November's elections and their immediate aftermath, Right to Work supporters picked up a net of five Senate seats. This included one incumbent who had voted "no," but switched his position in early 1997.

This occurred even as the Clinton-Gore team was reelected in an Electoral College landslide.

### **Right to Work Bill Would Repeal Federally-Imposed Forced Union Dues**

Unfortunately, GOP House leaders never allowed a parallel vote on the National Right to Work Act. This bill (whose House version is H.R.500 in the current Congress) would repeal all federal labor-law provisions that authorize the firing of employees for refusal to pay dues or fees to an unwanted union.

And soon congressional GOP leaders virtually jettisoned the strategy of confrontation on other cutting-edge issues.

As a consequence, senior National Right to Work Committee officers believe GOP House and Senate leaders will be lucky not to see their respective 231-202 and 55-45 majorities trimmed substantially, or even obliterated, in this fall's elections.

"Roll-call votes this year on H.R.500 and its Senate companion, S.370, would expose the anti-Right to Work bias of union-boss incumbents, including several who are in potentially very close races," said Committee President Mark Mix.

"But unless GOP leaders change course soon and hold such votes, I expect the vast majority of endangered Big Labor incumbents to keep their seats, in part because they won't have to vote on H.R.500 or S.370."

### **No Vote Means Voters Pay Less Attention to Right to Work Issue**

A 2004 scientific survey taken by the Research 2000 firm found that 79% of regular voters agree that no worker should be forced to affiliate with a union to get or keep a job. (Research 2000 polls are frequently cited in world-renowned news sources like CNN, the Washington Post, and the Wall Street Journal.)

Unfortunately, without a vote on H.R.500 or S.370, many citizens' attention will not be focused on Right to Work.

"Clearly, public support for the Right to Work principle is overwhelming. And 145 GOP congressmen and senators, a majority of all Republican members of Congress, are already sponsors of either H.R.500 or S.370," noted Mr. Mix.

"Yet House Speaker Dennis Hastert [R-Ill.] and Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist [R-Tenn.] nevertheless appear to be too timid to bring up these national Right to Work measures for votes before Election Day.

"I urge all Right to Work members to contact Mr. Hastert at 202-225-2975 and Mr. Frist at 202-224-3344 to ask them to stop being so timid.

"The cringe is not a winning posture. Or, as Reed Larson [Right to Work's leader from 1959 until 2003, now executive chairman] likes to put it, 'It's the cringing dog that always gets kicked.'" 🐕



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Although public opinion overwhelmingly favors the Right to Work principle, GOP congressional leaders are

avoiding a confrontation on this issue. This "cringing dog" strategy puts their party's majorities at risk.