

Right to Work Supporters Score TSA Victory

Block Capitol Hill Scheme to Corral Airport Screeners Into Unions

In a significant victory for opponents of forced unionism, on August 3 President Bush signed into law H.R.1, legislation implementing the anti-terrorism recommendations of the 9/11 Commission.

Unlike the versions of the 9/11 Commission Bill adopted by the House and Senate early this year, the measure signed into law happily does not foist union monopoly bargaining on employees of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

And thousands and thousands of National Right to Work Committee members helped ensure that a monopoly bargaining-free 9/11 Commission Bill made it to the President's desk.

Big Labor Lusts For Power to Dictate Working Conditions Of All Airport Screeners

Under the 1978 Federal Labor Relations Act (FLRA), passed by Congress and signed by President Jimmy Carter, government union bosses are currently granted monopoly power to negotiate over how more than 1.1 million federal employees do their jobs.

Union bosses wield control over roughly 33% of all federal employees.

However, for nearly three decades the law has allowed the President and his executive appointees to cancel union monopoly-bargaining privileges over employees doing intelligence or national-security work if their jobs are deemed to be particularly sensitive.

Acting at federal union bosses' behest and contemptuously dismissing national-security concerns, Big Labor Democrats and some Big Labor-appeasing Republicans moved early this year to take this discretion away from the executive branch.

H.R.1 and its Senate counterpart, S.4, would originally have gutted the authority of the head of the TSA to exempt federal airport screeners from union monopoly rule.

In practice, these bills would have forced roughly 56,000 airport screeners in the TSA, including union members and nonmembers alike, to allow union bosses to dictate their working conditions.

After H.R.1 swept through the House in a lopsided vote on January 9, the Committee's legislative staff quickly began encouraging normally pro-Right to



Mark Mix and other Committee leaders repeatedly urged pro-Right to Work members of Congress to stand

firm in their opposition to TSA monopoly bargaining. This summer, the Committee's efforts paid off.

Work senators to declare publicly they would not support S.4 unless and until the TSA monopoly-bargaining provision was eliminated.

Committee officers also called on President Bush to make it 100% clear that he would veto either bill if it reached his desk with the imposition of union control over TSA employees intact.

The Committee lobbying blitz began to pay off on February 27, when 36 senators made public a letter to the White House they had signed pledging to vote to uphold a presidential veto of S.4 as long as it authorized a Big Labor TSA takeover.

The next day, the White House issued a veto threat.

Committee President Mix: Union Bosses Are Still Scheming to Seize TSA

Facing a veto and pro-Right to Work blocs in both the Senate and the House sufficient to sustain it, union-label Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) and Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) held off further action on the 9/11 Commission legislation for months.

Finally, in mid-July, Mr. Reid tacitly

conceded that the American public did not support the TSA monopoly-bargaining provision and certainly didn't want the 9/11 Commission Bill held up over it. He quietly stripped the provision from the bill.

With the monopoly-bargaining issue out of the way, the revised H.R.1 quickly passed through Congress.

Committee President Mark Mix observed that the TSA victory shows that, when GOP leaders in Washington, D.C., heed the voices of grass-roots Committee members and stand up for the Right to Work principle, they can regularly win legislative battles.

However, warned Mr. Mix, Big Labor lackey politicians like Reps. Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.) and Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas) are already plotting with union lobbyists about alternative means through which TSA monopoly bargaining can be imposed.

"Clearly, Big Labor still craves monopoly-bargaining power over the 56,000 TSA screeners. To ensure that our recent victory stands secure in the weeks and months ahead, Right to Work supporters must remain vigilant," Mr. Mix concluded. 