

Another Big Labor Appeaser Bites the Dust

In Tennessee, GOP Primary Voters Say 'No' to Incumbent David Davis

In the summer of 2007, when Big Labor was ramming its so-called "Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act" through the U.S. House, dozens of GOP congressmen and women with strongly pro-Right to Work constituencies were led to believe this legislation was a bone they could throw to Big Labor.

Now more and more of these elected officials, along with their Big Labor-appeasing counterparts in the U.S. Senate, are learning that the legislation, numbered H.R.980 and S.2123 in the current Congress, is in reality a deeply unpopular forced-unionism power grab.

The latest Republican politician to learn this bitter lesson is Tennessee Congressman David Davis.

Mr. Davis, who has been entrusted to represent the northeastern tip of the Volunteer State, was the surprise loser in an August 7 Republican congressional primary. Johnson City Mayor Phil Roe defeated Mr. Davis by a scant 500 votes.

David Davis Voted For Big Labor Power Grab, Then Doubled Down

Mr. Davis's July 2007 vote for H.R.980, and even more his subsequent decision to ignore the pleas of pro-Right to Work Tennesseans that he repudiate that vote and pledge to oppose such legislation in the future, turned out to be significant liabilities for his re-election bid.

"All politicians make mistakes. Some

mistakes cost more than others," commented National Right to Work Committee Vice President Matthew Leen.

"However, the better politicians are ready to listen to well-informed constituents, especially constituents who have supported them in the past, who criticize a vote they have cast. And if a politician then decides that he can no longer justify a vote, he repudiates it.

"That's not what David Davis did. He both cosponsored H.R.980 and helped Big Labor Democrats steam-roll it through the House, and then, when freedom-loving Tennesseans protested, he doubled down.

"But now he has paid a steep political price for his decision. And he isn't the first House member to do so."

Congressmen Burton, Jones Admitted Error, Survived Stiff Primary Challenges

"For example," continued Mr. Leen, "GOP Congressman Wayne Gilchrest of Maryland, who had first voted for H.R.980, then rebuffed constituent entreaties that he change his position, was defeated earlier this year by 100% pro-Right to Work challenger Andy Harris.

"Phil Roe, Mr. Davis's successful challenger, also took a strong stand against H.R.980 during the primary campaign and pledged to oppose all such measures, as well as other forced-unionism legislation, if elected to Congress.

"In contrast to Mr. Davis and Mr.

Gilchrest, GOP incumbent Congressman Dan Burton [Ind.] and Walter Jones [N.C.] survived stiff primary challenges this spring, even though they had also voted for H.R.980. After they came to fully understand H.R.980's impact, they promised not to support it again in the future."

Bill Would Institute Federal Public-Safety Union Monopoly-Bargaining Mandate

H.R.980/S.2123 would establish a new federal mandate imposing union "exclusive representation" (monopoly bargaining) over state and local police and firefighters and other public-safety employees in all 50 states.

It would force countless policemen, firefighters and EMT's to accept as their monopoly-bargaining agent a union they never voted for, and want nothing to do with.

Ever since last summer's House roll call, Committee members and supporters have, through letters, phone calls, and personal visits, been expressing their disappointment with all the politicians who voted for this legislation.

Mr. Davis decided to spurn the pleas of pro-right to Work Tennesseans.

As recently as July 26, he was quoted in the Greeneville (Tenn.) *Sun* reiterating his support for H.R.980 and regurgitating Big Labor "talking points" in favor of the legislation.

Since the Committee's list of Right to Work supporters in Tennessee's First U.S. House District includes roughly 18,000 names, and Mr. Davis ultimately lost the primary by some 500 votes, it would seem fair to surmise the Right to Work issue made a real difference in the Tennessee primary.

"GOP voters in the Volunteer State have sent a message that they won't put up with Republican officials who try to 'finesse' the forced-unionism issue. It's a message to which GOP politicians across the country should pay heed," said Mr. Leen.

This fall, Mr. Roe is considered to be the strong favorite in the general election U.S. House race against Big Labor-backed Democrat Rob Russell. And, just as it was in the primary, Mr. Roe's 100% pro-Right to Work stance is sure to be a political asset in November. 📧



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Many of the rank-and-file Republican voters in eastern Tennessee who strongly oppose forced unionism

recently banded together to deal a stern rebuke to Big Labor-appeasing Congressman David Davis.