

Senate Votes on Right to Work Amendment

Politicians' Stands on Forced Unionism Now in the Spotlight

On January 22, U.S. Sen. Jim DeMint (R-S.C.), working hand-in-hand with the National Right to Work Committee, forced his colleagues to vote directly on the federal policy of compulsory unionism for only the second time in U.S. history, spotlighting senators who support firing workers if they do not join a union.

"The January vote on Sen. DeMint's Right to Work Amendment to S.181, the so-called 'Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act,' was a test -- a test to see which senators are for freedom and which are for coercion," said Committee President Mark Mix.

"This may be our Alamo," noted Mr. Mix.

"The last time the Senate voted on national Right to Work legislation, 68 senators supported federally imposed compulsory unionism. Today, only 29 of those senators remain in the chamber. And one of those 29 actually switched his vote and supported Right to Work this year."

Right to Work Gains Strength in Republican Senate Caucus Since 1996

"And the Republican Senate caucus is now much more pro-Right to Work than it was in July 1996, when the Senate last voted directly on a measure to abolish all federally imposed forced union dues and fees," Mr. Mix continued.

"In the 1996 vote, 60% (barely a majority) of GOP senators supported Right to Work. This year, more than three-quarters of Republican senators stood up against compulsory unionism.

"History shows that when politicians vote for compulsory unionism they often pay the ultimate political price. Over the years, voters have littered the political landscape with the corpses of politicians who publicly vote to force hardworking Americans to pay union dues just to get or keep their jobs.

"And time and again, union bigwigs have refused to accept GOP senators' anti-Right to Work 'olive branches' and successfully targeted them for defeat. Meanwhile, Big Labor efforts to oust pro-Right to Work senators have overwhelmingly failed."

Republican support for Right to Work today would be even stronger



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Working closely with Right to Work legislative staff members, last month South Carolina's Jim DeMint (R,

center) put senators on record in support of or opposition to federally-imposed forced union dues.

had not a handful of senators broken their longstanding and, in some cases, repeated pledges to constituents by opposing the DeMint Amendment.

Tennessee's Lamar Alexander Breaks Promises to Right to Work Supporters

The most flabbergasting flip-flop of all was that of Tennessee's Lamar Alexander.

Mr. Mix recalled that in 1996, when Mr. Alexander was running for the GOP presidential nomination, he not only pledged in writing to push for enactment of a national Right to Work law identical to the DeMint Amendment if elected, but actually visited Committee headquarters to repeat his vow face to face.

Mr. Alexander again reiterated his pledge to support a national Right to Work law when he ran for the first time and successfully for the Senate in 2002.

But last month, after publicly promising to support a national Right to Work law for over a decade, Mr. Alexander not only voted against Right to Work, but took to the Senate floor twice to denounce the Right to Work Amendment.

He thus gave aid and comfort to Democrat senators from swing states who otherwise might have been squeamish about supporting compulsory unionism.

Right to Work Amendment Would Not Add a Single Word to Federal Law

Despite the fact that the DeMint Amendment added not one word to the federal labor statute that already governs and preempts private-sector state labor policies and in fact merely erased those sections authorizing compulsory unionism, Mr. Alexander concocted a "states' rights" objection.

"This is a tired and phony excuse for trying to appease the union bosses," retorted Mr. Mix.

"If Sen. Alexander is really concerned about states' rights under the National Labor Relations Act, his only logical choice is to move to repeal it in toto."

Mr. Mix called on freedom-loving Tennesseans to keep phoning Mr. Alexander's office at 202-224-4944 to ask the senator to apologize for his anti-Right to Work vote and renew his pledge always to oppose forced unionism in the future. 📞