

FAIRNESS FOR SMALL BUSINESS
AND EMPLOYEES ACT OF 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. VINCE SNOWBARGER

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 1998

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3246) to assist small businesses and labor organizations in defending themselves against government bureaucracy; to ensure that employees entitled to reinstatement get their jobs back quickly; to protect the right of employers to have a hearing to present their case in certain representation cases; and to prevent the use of the National Labor Relations Act for the purpose of disrupting or inflicting economic harm on employers.

Mr. SNOWBARGER. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to speak for the many small owners in Kansas who have been working for years to reform the National Labor Relations Board and our current employment laws.

Millions of dollars and countless jobs have been lost in the Third District of Kansas because of the tactics of some labor unions. While I respect and appreciate the right of working Americans to be represented by a Union, I also respect the rights of the great majority of working men and women who choose not to be represented by a Union.

If this wasn't such an important issue, Mr. Chairman, I might remind my colleagues that my district has one of the healthiest economies in the nation, which is due, in no small part to Kansas' Right-to-Work legislation.

As we consider today's important reform initiative, I wanted to share with my colleagues some stories from my home in Kansas.

Millions of dollars and countless jobs have been lost in the 3rd District because of a tactic referred to by the AFL-CIO as "salting". This common procedure is used in Kansas by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. Their regular plan is to have around 20 union members storm into a non-union electrical contractor's office with video cameras mounted on their shoulders. The union members then demand to be hired and if they are not, they file discrimination charges with the National Labor Relations Board.

The two largest independent electrical contractors in my district, SKC Electric (200 employees) and Teague Electric (100 employees), have spent nearly \$500,000 (between the two of them) fighting frivolous charges of discrimination. Not once has the union asked for a NLRB sanctioned election to decide if the employees want to be represented by the IBEW. Instead, they harass the companies by driving up legal expenditures and limiting their ability to grow. Fortunately these two companies are financially strong and have been able to survive under this intense pressure for the past four years. But it is wrong to allow bad actor unions to literally . . . litigate small businesses to death.

Not everyone in my district has been so lucky.

M&R Electric was a two-year old electrical company with approximately 30 employees. It was owned and operated by a former union electrician who had saved to start his own small business. The company was growing rapidly and providing good careers for many

hard working young people. That is until the IBEW showed up with their video cameras and NLRB charges. By the time small company knew what hit them, they had spent more than \$250,000 fending off legal challenges and were out of business. I am sure most of my colleagues know that new businesses are very vulnerable. This is why these kinds of actions are so threatening. The result in this case? Thirty good jobs lost in my district.

The bottom line is, that no employer should be required by law to hire an individual who is bent on destroying their company.

Mr. Chairman, this practice is not defensible and the families who lost their jobs and the men and women who invested their life savings to start a business deserve the protections that this bill provides.

CAMPAIGN REFORM AND
ELECTION INTEGRITY ACT OF 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. BRUCE F. VENTO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 30, 1998

Mr. VENTO. Madam Speaker, I opposed H.R. 3485 which was defeated by the House. This legislation would guarantee a new arms race in campaigns and campaign spending by setting in place incentives for more money to be raised from special interests and more money to be spent.

While there is not agreement in Congress on the campaign finance reform, the American people have spoken. They are tired of slick, multi-million dollar campaigns that feature 30 second sound-bites and media spin masters. They want the unlimited campaign spending binges brought under control; they want the candidate, not the candidate's handlers, to speak; and they want campaigns to focus on the issues.

However, as with so many other matters, the Republican Majority Congress has failed to listen to what the American people want, and instead relied on the voice and pocketbooks of the special interests. The result was H.R. 3485, more money, not less and a greater alienation of the voters.

H.R. 3485 did nothing to bring the explosion of campaign spending under control. Instead, this legislation tripled the amount of money that individuals could contribute to state, local and federal political parties and doubled their contribution limits to federal candidates.

H.R. 3485 would make politics the playground of the wealthy. This legislation increased individual contributions to federal candidates from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per cycle (\$2,000 to \$4,000 for both the primary and general elections); to state and local parties from \$5,000 to \$15,000; national parties from \$20,000 to \$60,000 and the aggregate limit from \$25,000 to \$75,000. These levels do not invite participation by more people; it encourages more participation by the few who have the big bucks to participate.

While H.R. 3485 expanded the ability of wealthy to participate, this bill ironically contains a separate provision designed to intimidate low-income, minority citizens to keep them from voting.

This program, a citizen verification system, conjured up poll taxes and inhibiting actions

form another time in our history. This legislation was appropriately rejected by the House earlier this year.

The House should not detour from the road of campaign finance reform by adopting H.R. 3485. Instead, we should move forward with the solid bipartisan reform package, that the Republican leadership is blocking from House action. This alternative, similar to the McCain Feingold proposal offered in the Senate, will ban soft money and make a meaningful contribution to campaign finance reform.

There has been a lot of public consternation by Members of Congress about the declining participation levels and the feeling of disenfranchisement among American voters. After witnessing the lengths that the leadership will go to keep real campaign finance reform off of the House floor, I can understand why the American voter is giving up on Congress. The People's Body does not have time to do the people's work. Instead of bringing up meaningful campaign finance reform this week, the House is going to be dividing up the financial marketplace among the special interests who pour money into campaign coffers.

Madam Speaker, the process used last night harkens back to the smoke-filled rooms of long ago. A bill supported by a majority of the House was kept off the House floor through legislative legerdemain. Not only were we denied a full debate on campaign finance reform, but we were kept in the dark as to the final contents of H.R. 3581. This bill is like a lot of campaign ads—lots of rhetoric, not much substance.

It was appropriate that H.R. 3485 be considered so close to the Academy Awards. Like the 1972 Best Actress, Lisa Minelli, in the movie, Cabaret, this bill and its supporters were singing loud and clear "Money makes the world go around." It is time to get off the money merry-go-round and restore our political process to the American people by moving forward with true campaign finance reform.

HON. JOHN L. BURTON: STATE
SENATE PRESIDENT

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, it may still come as news to some members of the House that our former colleague, the Hon. John L. Burton of San Francisco, has recently been unanimously elected the President of the California State Senate, elevating him to one of the highest elective positions in our state.

John Burton, as all who know or have served with him know, is an extraordinarily gifted legislator, a deeply committed public servant, and very much his own man. There has not been a more dedicated or unrepentant spokesperson for working people, for children, for the poor, for those living on society's margin, than Johnny Burton.

His elevation to Senate President caps a remarkable and inspirational career. It also demonstrates that we can disagree, even strongly, but retain the personal relationships and trust that are integral to the operation of a successful legislative body. When John Burton set out to accomplish something on the floor of the House, whether it was expanding food stamp