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LEGISLATION TO REPEAL SECTION 14(b) OF THE TAFT-HARTLEY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHERMAN. Madam Speaker, in about a week, I will introduce legislation to repeal the infamous section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act and to rid this country once and for all of the so-called Right To Work statutes in 21 or 22 of our States.

Now, section 14(b) of the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act allows States to pass the so-called Right To Work laws, which strip unions of the right to charge fees even when they negotiate the contract that the employee works under.

Section 14(b) has been controversial from its inception. It was vetoed by President Truman. It became law only overriding that veto. What we have now is a network of different labor laws in different States that pits the workers in one State against another, that pits businesses in one State against another, that creates an unlevel playing field for businesses in one State as opposed to businesses in another State.

So-called Right to Work is union busting. It is that simple. Right to Work strips unions of their ability to require payment for the contract negotiation that they do. It is designed to encourage free riders and to weaken and destroy unions.

Every worker benefits from the union contract, but under so-called Right to Work laws, some pay absolutely nothing to the union that negotiates that contract. That encourages others to choose to pay nothing, and eventually the union unravels. That is exactly what has happened in the 22 so-called right-to-work States.

Now, Right to Work States have significantly lower unionization rates than do other States. The unionization rate in my State of California is 18 percent; in New York, 26 percent; in Washington State, 21 percent; in Wisconsin, 16 percent; in New Jersey and Michigan, 21 percent. None of those States have so-called Right to Work statutes. In contrast, such right-to-work States such as Texas, Arkansas, Utah and Georgia, have only 6 percent unionization rates, and North Carolina, with its Right to Work laws, has an only 4 percent unionization rate.

Now, it can be alleged that those who are in right-to-work States don't need unions. They enjoy great pay and great working conditions. Well, let's look at the facts. The average worker in a so-called Right to Work State makes \$5,333 less per year than a worker in a free bargaining State. That is a comparison of \$35,500 on the one hand, with \$30,167 on the other. Some 21 percent more people lack health insurance in

Right to Work States as compared with free bargaining States. And as for workplace and safety, workplace deaths are 51 percent higher in States with so-called Right to Work laws.

It is time that we repeal section 14(b). It is time that we let unions organize and time that we allow workers who want to have a union, to enjoy that right.

I serve as the Chair of the subcommittee of Foreign Affairs Committee with jurisdiction over trade issues, including the International Labor Organization. The ILO is the official international organization affiliated with the United Nations that sets labor standards. It is clear that our Right to Work laws violate international labor standards. The National Organization of Manufacturers acknowledged this just a few days ago when they pointed out that while Right to Work laws probably violate the ILO core conventions, we as a country have not ratified those core conventions. So a country that should be in the forefront of the world, in the forefront of human rights, civil rights and labor rights, has in 22 of its States laws that violate the ILO core convention.

It is time for America to stand in the forefront of human rights, civil rights and labor rights. It is time to end so-called Right to Work.

I urge my colleagues to contact me if they are interested in being original cosponsors of this legislation.

SAVE OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Madam Speaker, it is easy to be in Washington, DC, making bold predictions and promises and then ignore the realities right in front of our noses. Congress' failure to meet the July 1 deadline to prevent the scheduled fee reductions for Medicare providers is shameful and our failure to act has real consequences.

Seventeen percent of the people I represent are on Medicare, roughly 114,000 people. Many of these citizens live in communities where there are few doctors and few health care options. If the available doctors stop seeing Medicare patients, the health care access for all Kansans will be severely damaged. We must prevent the scheduled physician fee reductions from going into effect, and I encourage the Senate to take up necessary legislation now.

Just this week, I received a letter from a family physician back home. He, of course, expressed his frustration with our current Medicare system. Here are his words:

"It is with mixed emotion that I am writing to inform you of my intent to

leave my family medicine practice. I have reached the point where I am no longer willing to expose myself or my family to the risk of having to rely upon an increasingly unreliable and poor source of income, Medicare. As a small business with 12 employees, I don't have the margin to absorb others' incompetence or our government's capricious reimbursement. I am not willing to be a pawn in an ideological chess match in Washington, and therefore as of today I will no longer accept Medicare patients.

"I am considering a position in an economically booming region in another State that is nearly 95 percent private pay. What physician worth their salt will continue in a system that undervalues the work they do for a patient population that is the most complex and the most time demanding?

"Congress and the Medicare system are taking advantage of good-intentioned physicians who are more interested in caring for patients and upholding and honoring the Hippocratic Oath than lining their pockets. Even now, writing this letter to you, I feel a sense of guilt as though I am betraying my Medicare patients. I have realized, however, that it is not I that have betrayed the elderly, rather Congress."

When doctors close their practices, it creates a gap that is almost impossible for us in rural communities to fill. Congress must understand that we have a responsibility in making physicians want to continue to practice medicine, to not give them the reason to walk out their clinic or hospital doors and never look back. Congress needs to look closely at our role in these trends and make sure we are not encouraging this situation by playing politics with people's health care and their lives.

I hope that the Senate will pass legislation this week that can keep our vital health care system in place and protect our most vulnerable citizens.

REMEMBERING THE LIFE OF SENATOR JESSE HELMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Senator Jesse Helms. Senator Helms, who passed away this past 4th of July at the age of 86, was renowned for his considerable personal warmth and his commitment to the good of his constituents. So it is no surprise that in the days after his passing, tales from his constituents across the State of North Carolina paid tribute to his decades-long track record of thoughtful constituent service.

But Senator Helms was so much more than a good public servant. He