

Labor Management Committee

Description

The Labor Management Committee (LMC) represents the common legislative and regulatory interests of the tobacco industry and its the unions representing its workforce. The primary unions that form the LMC are the: Bakery, Confectionery, & Tobacco Workers International Union (BC&T), the International Association of Machinists (IAM), and the Sheet Metal Workers International Association (SMWIA).

Activity

The LMC's efforts with regard to national tobacco legislation began as the June 20th tobacco settlement moved to the legislative arena. Once the BC&T and IAM leadership expressed their support for the settlement the set out to help secure passage of national tobacco legislation that would solve the legal and regulatory issues which threatened the domestic tobacco industry and the tens of thousands of high-wage jobs dependent on it.

These efforts included: (1) The LMC's national and state consultants worked with the BC&T, the IAM, and tobacco-state labor federations to ensure that the AFL-CIO leadership, affiliated unions, and labor-friendly Members of Congress understood the importance of tobacco jobs to organized labor, particularly in the South; and, (2) that any position taken by organized labor on national tobacco legislation should first and foremost reflect the concerns of the industry's workers and their unions.

Parallel to this project, the LMC, with the BC&T and IAM, worked to educate unions and Members of Congress about third-party Taft-Hartley suits against the industry and why those suits threatened U.S. jobs. Numerous letters and visits from the Presidents of the BC&T and the IAM to Senators and House members engaged in tobacco legislation highlighted these concerns. The AFL-CIO ultimately took a neutral position on tobacco legislation and on the Taft-Hartley suits.

The LMC was also able to expand the net of traditional labor allies by alerting the unions of tobacco industry subsidiaries and suppliers about the detrimental effect national tobacco legislation could have on their workers if it was not done right. Jobs research provided by the member companies was critical in advancing this effort. Large unions, such as the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), and the Paperworkers became aware of their economic link with tobacco and lent their support to the LMC's efforts.

Once it became clear that national tobacco legislation would serve only to punish the industry and its workers, the LMC, working with the BC&T, the IAM, and the industry helped oppose unreasonable, anti-jobs legislation. Through lobbyists in Washington, D.C., and in several states (California, Iowa, Florida, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, and Washington) the LMC sent the message to targeted Senators and Representatives that the McCain bill and like-minded efforts would lead to lost jobs. The Presidents of the BC&T, IAM, and the UFCW, as well as the Presidents of several tobacco-state labor federations and local unions sent letters and met with large numbers of targeted Senators and Representatives urging opposition to the McCain bill because of the devastating impact it would have on the industry and its workforce.

In addition to these efforts, the LMC facilitated worker rallies in Louisville, Raleigh, and Richmond to engage rank-and-file union members. The LMC coordinated petition signings at conferences and plants. The effectiveness of the worker rallies was clearly illustrated when an early Richmond rally prompted Gov. Jim Gilmore to hold a tobacco summit on June 11.

Citizens for Tax Justice, the preeminent progressive tax research organization with close ties to organized labor, communicated to Congress the regressive aspects of McCain and its unfair impact on working families and the poor. In May, letters from CTJ noting that supporters of tax fairness were silent on the regressive nature of tobacco taxes reached Senators Breaux, Cleland, Dorgan, Ford, Hollings, Kerry, Murray, Reid, and Robb.

TI State Activities

Description

TI State Activities mission since the June 20th agreement has been two-fold: (1) To garner support at the state level for the Proposed Resolution; and, (2) once the process spun out of control, to mount opposition to the McCain bill in particular, and an increase in the federal excise tax on tobacco, generally. In addition to guiding the activities of TI lobbyists, TI State Activities helped coordinate the activities of the industry teams in each state. TI State Activities attacked these objectives in three main ways. First, where relationships existed, TI and/or company lobbyists made direct contacts with Members of Congress. Second, TI and/or company lobbyists encouraged state legislators, elected officials, and political leaders to contact Members of Congress with whom they had relationships. Finally, TI and/or company lobbyists engaged third party allies at the state level to contact Members of Congress with whom they had relationships.

Activity

A total of 76 Senators and 254 House members were contacted in one or more of the following ways: Personal meetings, phone calls or letters by industry team members; through legislators, elected officials or political leaders; and/or via letters, visits, or calls from third party allies.

- 41 Senators and 149 House members met with team members.
- 9 Senators and 15 House members met with legislators, elected officials, or other political leaders
- 21 Senators and 85 House members met with third party allies.
- 196 Senators and House members received letters either supporting the PR, opposing an increase in the FET, or opposing the McCain bill, from third party allies, legislators, elected officials, or other political leaders.