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August 9, 1994

TO: Walter Woodson
FROM: Savarese and Associates
RE: Labor Management Committee Special Project

On August 2-4, the Labor Management Committee (LMC) implemented the second phase of its special congressional contact project involving BC&T women members. This phase brought 13 members representing 7 tobacco local unions to Washington to lobby House and Senate members on the federal excise tax/health care reform issue. The timing of this phase was propitious as the Mitchell and Gephardt bills were both newly introduced.

The focus of this phase of the program was Members of Congress from non-tobacco states, primarily members of the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Women's Caucus. The BC&T members also used these congressional meetings to address other issues such as OSHA/IAQ, the Waxman bill (H.R. 3434) and FDA regulation of tobacco. During a two-day period, the union representatives held 18 meetings with House and Senate members or staff.

As was the case with the first phase of the program, this phase, including all preparatory and followup work, was coordinated with the Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers International Union (BC&T) by LMC representatives Jim Savarese, Leslie Dawson, John Jarvis, Tom Donahue and Harry Kaiser. Media outreach for this phase was coordinated by the public affairs firm of Powell Tate. (Powell Tate will provide a separate report on the media effort.)

This phase of the project enabled the Union to present a unique perspective on the industry to Members of Congress who had little or no knowledge of the industry or its workforce. Discussions we had with the BC&T members indicate that virtually all of the Members of Congress and staff with whom they met were completely unaware of the demographics of the workforce and the compensation and benefits the industry's workers receive. The lone exception was Congressman Floyd Flake of New York who is from North Carolina and was formerly employed by R. J. Reynolds.

While some congressional offices were uncooperative or completely unsympathetic, particularly those from California, most of the Members of Congress and staff expressed appreciation to the women for providing this other "face" of the industry. This new information helped soften the image of the industry and some of the attitudes non-tobacco state members have of the industry.

Congresswoman Karen Thurman of Florida was particularly friendly and encouraging to the women. She indicated how valuable it was to her to hear about the industry from the perspective of women workers, and praised them for standing up for working people.

Also of note was Congressman Earl Hilliard from Alabama. Coming from an rural, agricultural area, he was sympathetic to the women's position. He said he was going to be traveling to Kentucky to meet with Mattie Mack, the black woman tobacco farmer, as he was very impressed by her.

Lobbying reports provided by the women indicate a general support among the offices they visited for the excise tax proposal offered in both the Mitchell and Gephardt bills, forty-five cents phased in. The women expressed to the Members of Congress the Union's position that they would prefer no new excise taxes but saw forty-five cents phased in as the highest figure that they could accept.

The following is a summary of the activities undertaken during the August 2-4 period:

August 2

On August 2, a dinner was held for the BC&T women at the America Restaurant, Union Station. Labor Management Committee representatives and BC&T International staff welcomed the women and offered a brief overview of the week's activities.

August 3

On August 3, LMC representatives provided a one and one-half hour briefing for the participants. In addition to LMC representatives, BC&T International Public Relations Director Carolyn Jacobson and representatives from Powell Tate were in attendance.

The briefing covered all aspects of the federal excise tax, IAQ/OSHA, H.R. 3434 and FDA regulation issues, as well as a review of the members they were preparing to visit. Following the briefing session, the participants began their congressional visits, which took place for the remainder of the day.

In the evening, a dinner was held for the participants at the Capitol View Club Restaurant, Hyatt Regency Hotel. The featured guest was BC&T International Executive Vice President Dave Durkee. Also attending was Dick White of the Tobacco Institute.

August 4

On August 4, the congressional visits began with a meeting for all participants with Senator Ford's top staff person on the issue, Matt Rapp, and representatives from the offices of Senators McConnell and Helms. Also attending were LMC representatives. The Senate staff expressed appreciation for the effort by the Union and the participants. They explained that these visits, like those in phase one, will have a significant impact on the debate.

Following this meeting, the participants then spent the rest of the morning on congressional visits.

A "wrapup" luncheon was held at the National Democratic Club. The featured guest was Gloria Johnson, President of the Coalition of Labor Union Women and a member of the AFL-CIO Executive Council. Also speaking to the participants was Brennan Dawson of The Tobacco Institute.

Over the next week, followup activities will be undertaken by the LMC and the BC&T. These activities will include letters from the participants to Members of Congress as well as internal communications on the federal excise tax and other issues.

Enclosures

cc: Bob Curtis
✓ Carol Hrycaj
Dick White

The following is a summary of the congressional visit reports prepared by the participants:

Cong. Pat Danner (MO) - Staff for Cong. Danner indicated that she has not committed, but that she opposed any type of high tax that would attack one industry. She is particularly sensitive to loss of jobs of women in the industry and understands the "snowball effect" of excessive tobacco taxes.

Cong. Walter Tucker (CA) - Staff for Cong. Tucker was very noncommittal on the issue.

Cong. Earl Hilliard (AL) - The meeting with Cong. Hilliard went very well. He understands the impact of a high tax on the community. The BC&T representatives felt he was someone we need to keep in contact with because he will be helpful in the future. He supports the 45-cent tax phased in over 5 years.

Sen. Wendell Ford (KY) - Representatives from Senators Ford, McConnell and Helms briefed the participants on the excise tax issue, the OSHA regulation and the FDA situation. They told the women that they are working together as a coalition with other tobacco state senators and thanked them for their efforts.

Cong. Jill Long (IN) - It was generally felt that Cong. Long was not too sympathetic to the workers' position.

Cong. Floyd Flake (NY) - Cong. Flake used to work at R.J. Reynolds. He was friendly to the union representatives and said he was supporting the 45-cent phase-in.

Cong. Corrine Brown (FL) - Cong. Brown said she supports the Gephardt Bill with the 45-cent phase-in. She said she was supportive of people maintaining their jobs in the industry.

Cong. Lynn Woolsey (CA) - Cong. Woolsey indicated that she supports the 45-cent tax.

Sen. Carol Moseley-Braun (IL) - Staff indicated that Sen. Braun supports the Mitchell Bill. Staff expressed the Senator's concern on health issues, even though she is a smoker.

Sen. Barbara Mikulski (MD) - Staff for Sen. Mikulski indicated she supports the Mitchell Bill. Staff expressed that she has health concerns about smoking.

Cong. Lucille Roybal-Allard (CA) - Staff said she is very supportive of women and minority workers who support their families. Staff asked for suggestions for other ways to pay for health care in lieu of cigarette excise taxes. Staff reported that the Congresswoman was initially opposed to an excise tax increase, but will now support the 45-cent phase-in.

Cong. Bennie Thompson (MS) - Staff indicated that they are still studying the health care bill. Staff stressed that Cong. Thompson is very supportive of labor and working people.

Cong. Karen Thurman (FL) - Union representatives were very impressed with Cong. Thurman, who told them they were doing a good job in getting their message across. She said she initially opposed any tobacco tax increase, but after review, she will support the 45-cent phase-in.

Cong. Blanche Lambert (AR) - Staff indicated that she would support the 45-cent increase and nothing less. She is still undecided about the health care bill and indicated she has a problem with the employer mandate in the Gephardt Bill as it relates to farmers in her district.

Cong. Charles Rangel (NY) - BC&T members left a note thanking the Congressman for his help on the excise tax issue.

Cong. Maxine Waters (CA) - BC&T members were not given a very warm reception by staff - no one was available to meet with them.

Cong. Ed Pastor (AZ) - BC&T members thanked the Congressman's staff for his help on tobacco issues.

Sen. Patty Murray (WA) - Sen. Murray was busy at the Whitewater hearings, so materials were left on the issue.

Materials were dropped by and informal conversations were held with reception staff in the following offices:

- Cong. Cleo Fields (LA)
- Cong. Mel Reynolds (IL)
- Cong. Albert Wynn (MD)
- Cong. Nydia Velazquez (NY)
- Cong. Donald Payne (NJ)
- Cong. Bobby Rush (IL)
- Cong. Solomon Ortiz (TX)