

THE LMC SUPPORT INITIATIVE -- BUILDING SUPPORT FROM TOBACCO INDUSTRY SUPPLIER UNIONS

Overview

- As the legislative and administrative climate surrounding the tobacco industry becomes more difficult by the day, consideration must be given to approaches that will expand the support the industry and its unions receive within the broader labor community.
- Currently, the core support on legislative and administrative public policy matters affecting the industry comes from the unions with members directly involved in cigarette manufacturing, primarily the BC&T, Machinists and some of the craft unions (Sheet Metal Workers).
- Recommend a new LMC initiative aimed at those unions representing workers at companies which supply the industry.
- Because the suppliers to the industry are numerous and extremely diverse, both from a product and geographical standpoint, there should be a variety of unions from an array of states involved.
- The goal of the program would be to engage an entirely new set of labor organizations into the policy debate on tobacco issues at the federal, state and local levels. This would strengthen the position of the core unions, particularly in those regions and states where there is no cigarette manufacturing presence.

Implementation

- The first phase of the program would require extensive review and analysis of suppliers to the industry and the collective bargaining relationships that they have. Member companies would provide the supplier information to the Committee. Committee staff would then research the collective bargaining relationships that exist at these companies.
- The second phase would be the initial outreach to the national unions which have members working for firms that supply the industry. This would require assistance and coordination primarily with the BC&T and the IAM national officers. The Committee would coordinate this activity.

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- This phase will also include outreach by Committee representatives to the state and local labor organizations with members employed by supplier companies.

Initially, the outreach would be introductory and educational, with the ultimate goal being a development of support for the Committee's positions on tobacco issues from these unions at the federal, state and local levels.

- A project of this magnitude is extremely labor intensive and requires individuals with unique skills and experience. It is by no means a short-term or "one-time" shot type of initiative. In fact, for it to be successful it must be long term. The relationships that are developed must be constantly strengthened in order to maintain the support.

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