Consolidated and Reformed Workforce Development and Literacy Act (1976): Speech 22

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LABOR ORGANIZATIONS

SENATE BILL: Throughout the Senate bill there are references to the inclusion of "labor" or "labor organizations" when referring to worker participation in a collaborative or negotiating process associated with the development of services and establishing plans and activities.

HOUSE BILL: The House legislation refers to "employees" when attempting to provide worker participation in the collaborative or negotiating procedures in this system. The House GOP position is that organized labor, which represents a small minority of workers in today's employment world should not get preferential treatment in being placed on boards or included in negotiations over services.

SENATE AND HOUSE DEMOCRAT'S PROPOSAL: The Democrats have proposed the use of the term "employees and labor organizations" as a compromise.

HOUSE GOP'S RESPONSE: The House Republicans continue to refuse to agree and have responded with "employees or labor organizations" as a counter-proposal.

TALKING POINTS: The Democrats are united in seeking the inclusion of labor organizations in light of the clear attempt to exclude them from the process with no apparent reason other than the disdain the House GOP has for labor unions.

This seems like a very silly issue to be raising to a Member's level if the Republicans are serious about moving this bill in a bipartisan fashion. Labor organizations have proven to be effective contributors in developing the PICs and local systems.

The two primary customers of this new training system are the workers who want to be employed or have been and want to be again, and the employers who want to employ qualified workers. In developing the system which will serve both populations it remains critical that labor organizations, whose focus and service revolves around the worker's needs be represented at the table.

Labor unions bring a larger perspective of the economic spectrum to bear than simply single employees plucked off an assembly line. This is no way is to demean the input the individual worker may have to the process. Their views are a welcome addition to the development of the system. But they should not come at the loss of the broader viewpoint the organized worker representative should bring to bear.

Current law in the JTPA program clearly identifies the inclusion of "representatives of organized labor" on the local boards which constitute the backbone of our present training system. There has not been any kind of groundswell that organized labor's presence has been a hindrance on the system. To the contrary, we find that in those local systems which are seen as the most effective the active involvement of both the labor representatives and employers have proven a key to establishing a flexible and responsive system which is meeting the needs of the current workforce and the employers in the region.