

Federal bureaucracy enrages business

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Twenty-one representatives who took a stand against legislation creating the Agency for Consumer Protection (ACP) were praised recently by Wilson S. Johnson, president of the National Federation of Independent Business

(NFIB), the nation's largest small business organization. The 21 legislators, members of the House Government Operations Committee, voted to block efforts to report the ACP bill to the House floor for action. The legislation was reported out by a 22-21 vote.

"It's just too bad that the small businessman couldn't find one more representative brave enough to vote against this terrible bill," Johnson said. "Those 21 men who did oppose the bill, voted the conviction of most Americans. An Opinion

Research Corporation pool shows that 81 per cent of the citizens oppose such a new bureaucratic agency."

The 21 Congressmen praised by Johnson included Lancaster County's Robert Walker.

Johnson said that he wants to make it emphatically clear that NFIB opposes the proposed new agency because many of ACP's supporters claim that only big business is against the legislation.

"Struggling small businessmen and farmers see this monstrous bill as a

detriment to their continued existence. NFIB wants to encourage all congressmen to battle against this legislation on the House floor.

"The ACP proposal doesn't coincide with President Carter's promise to cut the size and power of government. There already are more than 200 consumer advocacy agencies at the federal, state and local level," he charged.

"The small businessman already spends one half to one day a week on federal paperwork....he sure doesn't need to be burdened by more red tape," Johnson said.

Johnson refuted arguments that ACP will be a small agency, pointing out that the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA), fed by the taxpayers' dollars, has grown fat. "OSHA in 1972 had a budget of \$35.8 million and 350 inspectors," he said. "In fiscal 1978, OSHA will have \$134.6 million and 1,400 inspectors. Can the taxpayers afford any more of these SMALL agencies?"

"Despite arguments that ACP would be non-regulatory, the legislation requires the President to determine what existing consumer programs should be made part of the agency. President Carter could transfer such regulatory agencies as the Consumer Product Safety Commission and various consumer

programs from the Federal Trade Commission," he added.

"ACP quickly would become one of Washington's super regulators," Johnson said. "In other words, another agency whose function is to cause delay, and we all know that only aggravates costs. Does the American consumer, already concerned about inflation, want to see another round of inflationary rises caused by the needless meddling of faceless bureaucrats hiding inside another cumbersome federal agency? We think not."

Johnson pointed out that the legislation exempts organized labor and its contract negotiations from ACP jurisdiction. "Negotiated wage and fringe benefit increases mean price hikes. By exempting organized labor, and not small business, the legislation exempts a major determinant of consumer prices and needlessly covers one sector that has less impact."

"A worthwhile small business paperwork exemption also is contained in the ACP bill," Johnson said. "It doesn't exempt small business from the law-only temporarily from required paperwork generated by the law. It also permits the ACP administrator to request data from a small business, a requirement that might be

constructed by many small firms as another demand from another federal czar."

Johnson predicted a close vote on the House floor on the ACP bill.

"The mounting complaints from citizens opposed to another bureaucracy are having an effect," he said. "We hope that Congress will listen to their constituency and bury this bad idea once and for all."

NFIB is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization representing the interests of more than 500,000 member firms.



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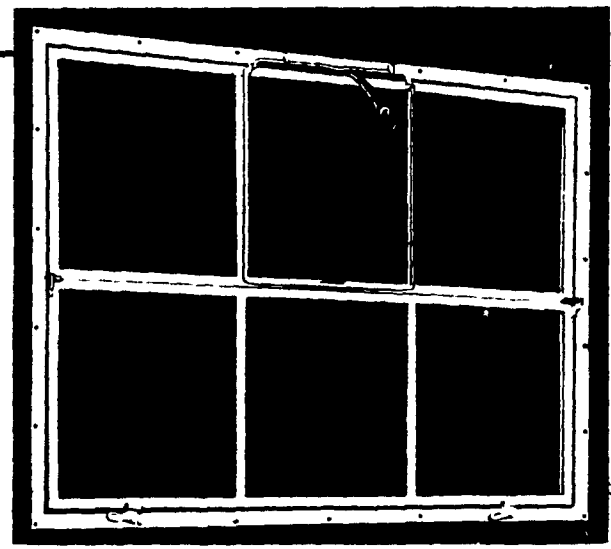


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