

NEWS U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS
FROM: SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, May 8, 1996

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TEAMWORK FOR EMPLOYEES & MANAGEMENT ACT

ALLOW COMMONSENSE TO REIGN IN WORKPLACE: "WHEN COMPANIES & WORKERS WORK AS A TEAM, THEY DO BETTER & SO DOES AMERICA"- PRESIDENT CLINTON, BEFORE LABOR BOSSES' \$35 MILLION CAMPAIGN BOOST

I would like to take this opportunity to support the Teamwork for Employees and Management Act, known as the TEAM Act.

It is hard to believe that in 1996, federal law tells employers and employees that they cannot work together in cooperative teams to jointly resolve issues of concern in the workplace. Since 1992, the National Labor Relations Act of 1935 has been interpreted to prohibit forms of collaborative discussions between groups of employees and management that deal with key issues such as workplace safety, productivity rewards and benefits, and job descriptions.

Does that make sense? No. And it doesn't make sense to most Americans.

Allow Employers & Employees to Resolve Workplace Issues

The TEAM Act simply allows commonsense to reign in the workplace. Employees and employers can and should be able to resolve workplace issues among themselves without the fear of lawsuits.

So, why is the other side so exercised about this commonsense effort to help employees? Because the big labor bosses see any effort to improve the workplace environment without their involvement as a threat.

Suddenly, the minimum wage is not all that important because somewhere, someplace, some employee might have an idea that improves productivity, that makes the workplace safer -- all without the blessing of a labor boss.

It might occur to that employee that he or she doesn't need a labor boss -- he can be his or her own boss.

That's what is going on here. It's about power. Labor bosses want it for themselves.

But we on this side of the aisle have a different view. We think workers should have some control over their lives and some influence on conditions in the workplace. We think we should do everything we can to encourage this type of cooperative relationship.

Interestingly, President Clinton used to think so too. In his State of the Union address last January, President Clinton said: "When companies and workers work as a team, they do better - and so does America."

President Clinton was right then and wrong now.

So, what happened between January and May?

The big labor bosses called in their \$35 million dollar I.O.U.

The American worker deserves better.

No Interference With Already Established Union Activities

There is nothing in this legislation that changes the right of workers to join a union. The TEAM Act does not interfere with the activities of unions already established in companies. And it leaves in place protections against "sham" unions.

The TEAM Act simply extends to non-union workers the right union workers already have -- to have an effective voice for change in the workplace.

For those of my colleagues who would like to do something meaningful for American workers, I urge them to support the TEAM Act.

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* Remarks delivered on Senate floor, approximately 10:30 a.m.