

From: Ralph Bell Jr. <helmet_laws_suck@msn.com>
To: Veldran, KatherineKatherineVeldran@gov.sc.gov
Date: 8/26/2014 9:02:07 PM
Subject: Got an ambitious sponsor?

Katherine,

I was surprised that the Foundation for Applied Conservative Leadership ran this and was very involved with the passing of the roll call bill. I am disappointed that Talbert would use his now angry views to tarnish one of the turning points in what I have seen in our general assembly. I was there and still have the video as then representative Nikki Haley testified against the Senators about why this bill should pass and have been proud to have her leading our state since that time.

Ride Free I do,

Ralph Bell
ABATE State Coordinator
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"Make a career of humanity, commit yourself to the noble struggle for equal rights. You will make a greater person of yourself, a greater nation of your country, and a finer world to live in." Rev Martin Luther King Jr. April 18, 1959

Date: Sat, 23 Aug 2014 07:02:32 -0700
From: weeklyfacilemail@training4liberty.com
To: helmet_laws_suck@msn.com
Subject: Got an ambitious sponsor?

Dear Liberty Activist,

Choose your bill sponsor carefully.

It will be one of the most important choices you make when planning your project.

If you pick the wrong one. . . it could literally mean the difference between success and failure.

I speak with the voice of painful experience. I'll fill you in momentarily.

Remember, the two critical things you must have in a bill sponsor are (1) someone completely committed to your issue; and (2) someone who is tough as nails.

Just as important is what you DON'T want.

You don't want someone in leadership.

And you don't want someone with their eye on higher office.

These folks will use your bill, your work, your activists, and your money for their political gain.

And if they decide that quietly undermining you helps them more than fighting with you, they'll do it faster than Mike Rothfeld can say, "Bless your heart"!

This is what happened to me:

In the fall of 2008 I became involved in passing a law to force the South Carolina General Assembly to cast a recorded roll call vote on every new law they pass and on every section of the budget.

Remember, politicians want to stay OFF the record. Grassroots activists want them ON the record.

In South Carolina, it was virtually impossible to force our state Representatives and Senators to vote on the record. 95% of the time they were moving legislation with unrecorded voice votes.

We simply could not hold them accountable.

I didn't initiate this project, so unfortunately I wasn't able to choose the bill sponsor.

By the time I became involved, the bill had already been introduced by my (then) representative, Nikki Haley.

You may recognize her name as the current Governor of South Carolina.

But, at the time, she merely represented my district in the state House of Representatives.

I'm sure you see the problem.

At the time, I didn't know of her political aspirations. However, my ignorance did nothing to save me from the problems she caused!

We framed this as a fight for transparency in government and the citizens' right to know how their Representatives and Senators vote.

People understood this was a huge step toward ending the "smoke filled back room deals."

It was the people against the entrenched political class.

It grabbed media headlines.

And it was a great issue for Nikki Haley, a relatively unknown member of the House, to create a name for herself.

House leadership was adamantly against the bill. In fact, in the beginning Haley was "demoted" from a key committee assignment by the House Speaker because she refused to sit on her bill.

Her demotion created tremendous public sympathy, and was used as a running example of how much "they" were afraid of this bill. She was the martyr who sacrificed her position for the good of the bill and the people of South Carolina.

At least, that was her public persona.

Behind the scenes, it became clear that she was much more interested in the publicity than the bill.

She was building a gubernatorial campaign on that publicity.

She needed the controversy.

She couldn't let the bill pass, or she'd lose her media platform.

In fact, she allowed committee hearings to be delayed time and time again and refused to make the necessary motion to force a vote on the bill because she wanted the fight to continue through campaign season.

She always had a reasonable sounding excuse for why we needed to wait a couple of more weeks before we pushed forward.

It wasn't obvious then what her motives were. As they say, hindsight is 20/20.

She was quite skilled at maintaining her public status as a martyr for the cause, while doing very little to actually move the bill after first introducing it.

As her campaign for Governor ramped up, heading into a five way primary, it became clear that the committee chairman in the House was not going to hold a hearing.

He was pocket vetoing the bill.

We had two options to move the bill.

House rules allow a bill sponsor to write a formal request for a hearing. The chairman is required to hold a hearing

within two weeks of receiving the request.

Or, Haley could make a motion to "recall" the bill from committee to the floor of the House for a direct vote there.

She wouldn't do either.

I didn't suit her campaign timing.

It wasn't until after I made it clear to her that she would be very embarrassed if her inaction became public that she finally made the motion to "recall" the bill.

Haley won the primary pretty handily, and was eventually elected Governor.

It is widely recognized in South Carolina that the battle for roll call voting catapulted this virtually unknown member of the state House of Representatives into the Governor's chair.

But still, the bill hadn't passed.

Now, I figured at this point she had no reason to delay the bill and she should be willing to use her position to bring on the pressure to get it passed.

I was wrong!

After she was elected Governor, and after nearly three years fighting to get the bill passed, we were very close to crossing the finish line.

Grassroots pressure was extremely high.

Resistance in the House evaporated. They passed the bill unanimously.

We knew . . . and the Senate knew . . . if we could force it to a vote, we'd win. No one wanted to be caught voting against it.

Still, Senate leadership was fighting very hard to prevent it from coming up for a vote.

They based their argument against this law on the theory that it would violate our state constitution.

They claimed that since the constitution sets a minimum requirement for a roll call voting (and it is a very minimal requirement), that any law that had stricter requirements must be unconstitutional.

I'm not kidding! You can't make this stuff up.

Remember the question that we must ask ourselves anytime the political class gives us advice?

"If a member of the political class gives us advice and we believe what they say, how does it benefit them?"

Well, true enough, after Haley strung out our bill so she could have a controversy to run on, she needed a quick win to show that she could "get things done" as governor.

Deal Time

But instead of pushing hard to get the bill to a vote, she worked out a truly diabolical deal with Senate leadership.

A key committee vote on our bill was finally scheduled.

Haley was on the agenda to testify to the committee.

Late one evening several days before the hearing, I received a phone call from a friend who had just spoken to a Senator who had just left the Governor's mansion.

The Senator had just been told by the Governor's deputy chief of staff that a deal had been struck. The Governor was going to support an amendment to the bill that would delay its effective date until after a constitutional amendment was passed.

Haley was going to announce her support during her committee testimony.

In practical terms, that amendment meant the bill would never be enforced. Amending the South Carolina constitution is a very long and difficult process.

In the end, we had to actually mobilize against the Governor to prevent the amendment and save our bill.

Only after intense grassroots pressure did she change her mind and decide to support the original bill.

Had we not been tipped off ahead of time by our friend in the Senate, we never would have had the time to mobilize to prevent Governor Haley from effectively killing our bill.

So, be extremely careful when choosing your bill sponsor. And don't choose one who is in leadership or has higher political aspirations.

In Liberty,

Talbert Black, Jr.

JUST AREMINDER - the Foundation for Applied Conservative Leadership is increasing the number of schools they're doing this year.

You can purchase tickets or see when schools are coming to your area by going to <http://www.facltraining.org>, or by clicking on the image below.

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This message was intended for: helmet_laws_suck@msn.com
You were added to the system March 24, 2011.