



Congressman Tim Bishop

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BISHOP ASSAILS HOUSE GOP ON WORKPLACE SAFETY STANDARDS

Administration-Backed Bills Will Diminish Workforce Protections

Washington, DC-Congressman Tim Bishop took to the floor of the House of Representatives today to denounce a series of bills that assault workplace protections for America's workers. The series of four bills that were passed by the House today at the request of the Administration would weaken the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Bishop spoke out against the bills, charging the negative impact they will have on Long Island's workforce.

"This Administration has once again chosen in favor of the corporate sector and the special interests," Bishop said on the House floor. "Their reward in this bill comes at the expense of hard-working employees who depend on OSHA to keep an eye on working conditions."

Bishop expressed his disapproval of four rule changes that remove many employee protections. One rule change would allow the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission (OSHRC) to make exceptions to the 15-day deadline for employers to challenge OSHA citations. This will prevent OSHA from addressing workplace hazards in a timely manner.

Another bill will expand the OSHRC from three to five members allowing the President to stack the commission with appointees who favor corporate and special interests over employee safety. Bishop warned "when former executives win appointments to regulate the same industries in which they used to work, sound science and smart public policy usually take a back seat to political favoritism and ideology."

Bishop also opposed a bill to overturn a 1991 Supreme Court decision giving the Secretary of Labor the responsibility to enforce workplace safety standards. This measure would give the OSHRC the responsibility of interpreting and enforcing OSHA standards; a commission stacked with former executives and corporate managers would be harmful to employees.

Bishop voted against a fourth OSHA reform bill today that would hurt American taxpayers by requiring that the federal government pay the legal costs of certain employers if OSHA files a complaint but does not ultimately prevail in court proceedings. These costs would have to be paid even if OSHA was substantially justified in pursuing the action against the employer. Current law already permits small businesses to recover litigation costs where the government position was not substantially justified.

"The federal government and hard-working Americans should never be discouraged from filing a credible safety complaint against an employer," Bishop stated. "This legislation is another example of how this Administration considers big business interests a higher priority than hard-working Americans and middle-class families, who I will continue to fight long and hard to protect."

The bills, H.R. 739, H.R. 740, H.R. 741, and H.R. 742 all passed the House. They now move to the United States Senate.

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