



Adventures in Advocacy

Visit www.sbcmag.info for legislative updates and alerts.
Questions or article topics can be sent to sshields@sbcmag.info.

Cash In!

by Sean D. Shields

Cha-ching! You'll be hearing that sound in the near future, but it probably won't be because you've won the lottery or because your local grocer has reverted back to cash registers of a bygone era. No, it's the sound you'll hear when you pull the voting lever at the ballot box this November. At least it's the sound you should hear going off in your head. Let me explain.

This November, you and approximately 120 million other Americans will head to the ballot box and vote for lawmakers from governors and members of Congress to chairpersons of local school boards. In Congress, there are 33 Senate seats and 437 House seats up for election in November, and incumbents (lawmakers who already hold that office) are running for reelection in all but four Senate and 29 House races. That's a lot of people who want to keep their jobs, and you have a say as to whether they get to or not.

Matching personal ideologies is one common way to determine which candidate you vote for, and I certainly don't want to discourage you from following that time-honored practice. However, each of those lawmakers, particularly those seeking seats in Congress, has had—and most likely will continue to have—a direct impact on the cost of doing business in this country. As a consequence, you may want to consider judging the individuals for whom you vote, at least in some part, for their role in bringing those costs either up or down.

Let's look at a few examples. Immigration reform is as good a place to start as any, as it can potentially have a significant impact on your workforce and demand for your product. As you hopefully read earlier (see "Immigration: Bordering on Insanity," page 18), Congress has taken on this issue in 2005, and the incumbents who want their jobs back have weighed in on how they feel on this issue either by voting for or against H.R. 4437, the "Border Protection, Antiterrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2004," or S. 2611, the "Comprehensive

Immigration Reform Act." There may or may not be a vote on a compromise bill before Election Day. If there is one, votes on that bill should be considered as well.

Affordable employee health care is another important problem that directly impacts your operational costs. In August 2005, the House

Getting Out the Vote— What You Can & Can't Do

- You **CAN** encourage your employees to register to vote.
- You **CAN'T** tell them which political party, if any, to register with.
- You **CAN** conduct a non-partisan voter-registration drive within your company.
- You **CAN'T** prohibit/require the participation of any employee in that registration drive.
- You **CAN** encourage your employees to vote on Election Day.
- You **CAN'T** require any employee to cast their vote on Election Day.
- You **CAN** tell employees which candidates you plan to vote for.
- You **CAN'T** tell your employees which candidates they should vote for.
- You **CAN** inform employees of WTCA's voting record website.
- You **CAN'T** provide editorial comment on how to interpret those voting records.

passed H.R. 525, the "Small Business Health Fairness Act of 2005," which would give small business owners the power to band together through an Association Health Plan (AHP) and create a much larger health care coverage pool. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated an AHP could immediately reduce health care premiums by 25 percent. However, the Senate responded this summer by defeating a similar measure, S. 1955, the "Health Insurance Marketplace Modernization and Affordability Act of 2005." This bill was three votes shy of passage, and if finding affordable health care is a big problem for you, your Senators' votes on this bill may weigh heavily on your mind as you go to vote on their future.

Continued on page 103

Adventures in Advocacy

Continued from page 95

The estate tax, or “death tax,” may also be important for you if you’re a small family-owned business. Planning for this eventuality can cost such companies thousands of dollars a year, and both the House and Senate voted on H.R. 8, the “Death Tax Repeal Permanency Act of 2005.” This measure passed through the House, but failed on a procedural vote in the Senate—again by three votes.

To aid you in knowing candidates’ voting records on issues affecting your cost of doing business (immigration, affordable health care, tax and tort reform, energy policy, transportation, and trade), *SBC Magazine* has posted the voting records and of the members of the 109th Congress on its website at: www.sbcleg.com/votingguide.php. To save you valuable time, the guide limits individual voting records to a few key pieces of legislation related to these issues. For a quick snapshot, each lawmaker has received a percentage that corresponds to their overall vote performance on identified pro-component manufacturing business legislation.

Beyond assisting you in evaluating candidates, this information can also be useful for your employees to consider before they go into the voting booth. Just as changes in regulations affect your operating costs and business environment, they affect your employees’ opportunities for advancement, professional growth, increased earning power and affordable medical coverage. In this regard, communicating this relationship with your employees is important in motivating them to not only vote, but to consider heavily the benefits of supporting candidates who support their livelihood. The better informed you and your employees are on the candidates, the more effective you can be in the voting booth.

Recent national elections have proven that participation of a relatively few number of individuals in the voting process can make a significant impact on who gets elected and, consequently, the direction of our businesses and livelihoods over the next two years. Hopefully, that thought will motivate you and our employees to “cash in” on the opportunity and vote on Election Day in November. **SBC**

STRUCTURAL BUILDING **COMPONENTS**TM

THE FUTURE OF FRAMING

www.sbcmag.info

Dear Reader:

Copyright © 2006 by Truss Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. For permission to reprint materials from **SBC Magazine**, call 608/310-6706 or email editor@sbcmag.info.

The mission of **Structural Building Components Magazine (SBC)** is to increase the knowledge of and to promote the common interests of those engaged in manufacturing and distributing of structural building components to ensure growth and continuity, and to be the information conduit by staying abreast of leading-edge issues. SBC will take a leadership role on behalf of the component industry in disseminating technical and marketplace information, and will maintain advisory committees consisting of the most knowledgeable professionals in the industry. The opinions expressed in SBC are those of the authors and those quoted solely, and are not necessarily the opinions of any of the affiliated associations (SBCC, WTCA, SCDA & STCA).



6300 Enterprise Lane • Suite 200 • Madison, WI 53719
608/310-6706 phone • 608/271-7006 fax
www.sbcmag.info • admgr@sbcmag.info