



PRESS RELEASE

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U.S. Chamber of Commerce Takes Its Anti-Regulatory Road Show to Posh Chicago Hotel, Attacks Standards That Protect Illinois Families

On Oct. 6, political celebrity Andy Card will be selling wrong message on public safeguards

Chicago – When the U.S. Chamber of Commerce brings its anti-regulatory “road show” to the Millennium Knickerbocker Hotel in Chicago on Oct. 6, local business leaders will hear from Andy Card, White House chief of staff under former President George W. Bush. He will offer up a false choice between job growth and protecting families and communities from harm. The Coalition for Sensible Safeguards (CSS) urges Chicagoans and residents of Illinois to support strong public safeguards and reject corporate interests that would jeopardize public protections.

With a couple of political celebrities to sell its pro-Big Business agenda (the Chamber is also paying former U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh from Indiana to spread its propaganda), the Chamber is trying to push the message that the federal government has no role in ensuring clean water, safe workplaces, a secure financial system and food that is safe to eat. The American people know better.

Keeping a strong regulatory system in place is crucial to preventing serious illness or even death, and nowhere is that more evident than the current outbreak of *Listeria*. Foodborne illnesses affect millions of Americans each year, too often with fatal results. “Self-regulation” does not work.

"My only child, my 6-year-old son, died from eating *E. coli* O157:H7-contaminated ground beef. Perhaps Alex would be alive today if there had been stronger food safety regulations in place that put consumer health and safety above corporate interests," said Nancy Donley, president of STOP Foodborne Illness (formerly S.T.O.P.--Safe Tables Our Priority), which is headquartered in Chicago. "Now we've got individuals and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce actively pursuing measures to derail public health-based rules. Frankly, it's unconscionable. We're in the midst of yet another food safety crisis where, to date, 15 people have died from eating cantaloupe contaminated with a deadly strain of *Listeria*. Proponents of relaxing existing public health regulations and putting corporate welfare above the safety of consumers should have to look the grieving families in the eyes and explain why business interests should come before the protection of human life."

With the economy in a lethargic recovery, the Chamber has been attempting to use anxiety about economy to sell its message that regulations “impose heavy burdens on job creators.” McClatchy News

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Service recently [surveyed](#) owners of small businesses, many of them mom-and-pop operations, to find out whether they thought they were being “choked by regulation.” Not one of the owners complained about regulation in their industries, “and most seemed to welcome it,” McClatchy reported. “I don't want to see more regulations, but they don't choke our business,” said Rob Mann, CEO of Chicago-based apparel firm Henry-Lee and Co. LLC., in the McClatchy story. Other local small business owners are not buying the anti-regulatory hype, either.

“Attacking basic regulatory standards in our name, as the U.S. Chamber is doing in this road show, is yet another case of small business identity theft,” said David Borris, owner of Hel’s Kitchen Catering in Northbrook, Ill., and a leader in the Main Street Alliance small business network. “It’s stealing the good name of small businesses to advance an agenda that benefits big financial companies, big insurers and big polluters – at our expense. All rolling back environmental and financial standards does is shift the cost of the next oil spill or the next financial crisis onto small businesses who pay the price in lost customers and lost productivity. Standards and safeguards make sure the big guys don’t cut corners and leave the rest of us holding the bag.”

Added Robert Weissman, president of Public Citizen, “Campaigning against regulations may offer lucrative consulting jobs for Andy Card, but it will do nothing to address the nation’s jobs crisis. Given how deregulation spurred the Wall Street crash and the ensuing Great Recession, there’s every reason to believe Card is effectively advocating for more job loss.”

The Coalition for Sensible Safeguards maintains that the Wall Street financial collapse, the BP oil spill disaster, the Massey mine explosion, recalls of Chinese toys due to lead paint and outbreaks of *E. coli* and *Listeria* are all examples of the cost of deregulation and the need for strong public oversight of corporations.

“Andy Card is very familiar with the ways of Washington. He knows that these assertions of ‘overregulation’ are the same old complaints the U.S. Chamber of Commerce recycles every few years, regardless of the economic situation,” said OMB Watch President Katherine McFate. “It’s sad to see someone who was once committed to government service working for a project designed to undermine the environmental, health and safety standards that protect the people of Illinois and all Americans.”

**For more information, visit www.ChamberSnakeOilTour.org
and www.SensibleSafeguards.org.**

Additional resources:

- Fact Sheet: “U.S. Chamber Barricades the Truth in Illinois”
<http://www.fixtheuschamber.org/andy-card/us-chamber-barricades-truth-illinois>
- Report: “Regulation, Employment, and the Economy: Fears of job loss are overblown”
http://www.epi.org/publications/entry/regulation_employment_and_the_economy_fears_of_job_loss_are_overblown
- Report: “The combined effect of the Obama EPA rules”
<http://www.epi.org/files/2011/BriefingPaper327.pdf>

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The Coalition for Sensible Safeguards is an alliance of consumer, labor, scientific, research, good government, faith, community, health, environmental, and public interest groups, along with concerned individuals who believe that our country’s system of regulatory safeguards provides a stable framework that secures our quality of life and paves the way for a sound economy that benefits us all. For more information about the coalition, visit [http://www.sensible safeguards.org/about us](http://www.sensible safeguards.org/about_us).

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