

West Virginia Chamber Joins Effort Calling for President to Invoke Taft-Hartley Act Amid Port Strikes

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The West Virginia Chamber of Commerce has joined the United States Chamber of Commerce in its call for President Joe Biden to invoke Taft-Hartley to bring an end to the strike by the International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA).

West Virginia Chamber President Steve Roberts stated, “We are still feeling the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic that began over four and a half years ago. Our economy has largely recovered, but supply-chain issues continue to persist. This strike has the potential to unwind much of the progress we have made. Many West Virginians are already struggling to find everyday items for their household such as toilet paper and paper towels, and this is just the beginning of the effects.”

According to information provided to President Biden by U.S. Chamber of Commerce President Suzanne Clark, the ports that are affected by the ILA strike “collectively handle more than 68% of all containerized exports and 56% of imports for the nation, with a daily trade value exceeding \$2.1 billion.” Taft-Hartley was utilized by President George W. Bush in 2002 to end a strike by the ILA against 29 west coast ports, and before that it was used by President Nixon in 1971 to stop another strike, also by the longshoremen.

Roberts continued, “When crafting legislation surrounding labor management in 1947, Congress understood the need to protect the vital interests of the United States by authorizing the President to intervene in labor disputes when needed. The shortages of supplies that are being felt only two days into the strike are just the beginning. Serious effects including food shortages and significant job losses are a possibility if this strike continues. That is why President Biden needs to act now.”

Members of the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce are your small business neighbors. Chamber members employ over half of our state’s workforce and are found across our state. More information on the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce can be found at www.wvchamber.com.