

take advantage of a State audit law which provides it with enforcement protections from State action, is not protected from Federal enforcement actions.

Why would a company voluntarily disclose violations to a State when the feds can come after them for the same thing? It would be asking them to be hit with a lawsuit.

EPA has been very clear about its intent to scrutinize actions in States which have enacted laws and in States which are currently addressing audit bills in their legislatures. EPA has set up a task force to monitor the approval of State delegated programs under the Clean Air Act for States with voluntary environmental audit statutes. The Agency has indicated that approval of certain State programs may be delayed or denied because of their State audit privilege statutes. EPA has used this threat to withhold Federal program delegation in order to influence pending State legislation.

This is an astonishing breach of States' rights, if you ask me.

Threatening States because of laws their citizens' representatives have enacted. Governor Merrill of New Hampshire said it best in responding to EPA's opposition to that State's law:

I reject the suggestion that States like New Hampshire must recognize the primacy of Federal laws in order to successfully design and implement effective environmental laws. In fact, States have proven time and time again that the Federal Government does not know best and does not get the job done for the citizens of the several States. I hope that the EPA does not intend to minimize the independent sovereign rights of States to adopt and enforce environmental laws that protect our environment and add to our quality of life.

Full use of these State laws will never happen in this adversarial climate and an opportunity to encourage this creative and cost-effective approach to environmental problems will be missed if we do not take action on the Federal level.

Even the Clinton administration has recognized the value of promoting environmental self-auditing, having issued a policy statement in December 1995. It is a good step forward by this administration; unfortunately, it does not really do the job.

Basically, the administration policy says if companies come forward and voluntarily disclose violations, then EPA will not prosecute them as aggressively as they could otherwise. Not a real bonus. No evidentiary protection, no protection against citizen suits, and it is only a policy, not a rule, so it does not have the force of law nor does it have any impact on what the Justice Department or the FBI can do.

A nice gesture but that's about it.

The hearing makes a compelling case for enactment of Federal legislation. Senators BROWN and HATFIELD have introduced legislation, S. 582, to encourage environmental self-auditing by setting up parallel protections and incentives on the Federal level that parallel those on the State level.

Enactment of S. 582 will allow these 17 States to fully implement their laws. We here in Congress can put our money where our mouth is by enacting the kind of flexible, voluntary environmental statutes that we have all been talking about for a year. And it presents the EPA with the opportunity to work with instead of against our States. This is the best reason yet to pass the Brown-Hatfield bill.

We all get better environmental compliance.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business Thursday, May 23, 1996, the Federal debt stood at \$5,120,583,551,676.66.

On a per capita basis, every man, woman, and child in America owes \$19,329.45 as his or her share of that debt.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I thank the Democratic leader for being here. We do want to engage in some unanimous-consent requests and hear his response. I am pleased that we are able to make these offers today.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUESTS— H.R. 3415, S. 295, AND H.R. 3448

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I begin by asking unanimous consent that the majority leader, after notification of the Democratic leader, may turn to the consideration of H.R. 3415 regarding the gas tax repeal, and that it be considered under the following time restraints, 1 hour on the bill to be equally divided in the usual form, no amendments or motions be in order, and following the conclusion of time, the bill be read for a third time, and final passage occur without further action or debate.

I think, since we are entering the Memorial Day week, we could come together on an agreement on a number of unanimous-consent requests here, particularly this one. It would be very helpful to the American people if we could send this gas tax repeal to the President of the United States. He would be able to sign it right here at this critical moment as Americans are traveling all over our country. And, therefore, I make that unanimous-consent request at this time, Mr. President.

I further ask immediately following the disposition of H.R. 3415 the Senate turn to consideration of S. 295 regard-

ing labor-management—that is the TEAM Act, cooperation in the workplace—that no amendments or motions be in order, and there be 2 hours of debate to be equally divided in the usual form, and following the conclusion or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to third reading, and final passage occur all without action or debate. Again, that is the so-called TEAM Act, and it be brought up with no amendments.

I ask unanimous consent that following the disposition of S. 295, the Senate proceed to the consideration of H.R. 3448 regarding the minimum wage, and it be considered under the following time restraints: 1 hour on the bill to be equally divided in the usual form, one amendment in order to be offered by the majority leader or his designee, one amendment in order to be offered by the Democratic leader or his designee; that the amendments be offered in the first degree and limited to 1 hour each, to be equally divided in the usual form, no motions be in order other than motions to table, and following the disposition of the amendments and the conclusion of time the bill be advanced to third reading, and final passage occur all without further action or debate.

Therefore, I ask unanimous consent for all of those I listed.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, the distinguished majority whip and I have had the opportunity to discuss these matters now on several occasions and I appreciate his candor and the opportunity we have had to discuss ways with which to bring these bills to the floor.

I have indicated to him that on several of these bills my Democratic colleagues hope to offer amendments. It is not our desire to extend debate, to my knowledge, on any of these bills. Our hope, however, is that on the gas tax bill we have the opportunity to offer an amendment which would ensure that consumers benefit from this reduction in the gas tax. This unanimous-consent agreement would not allow for that. We have other amendments that we would like to be able to offer.

Because of our desire to offer amendments and our difficulty in having that right under this unanimous-consent agreement, I have to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, if I could inquire of the Democratic leader, I know that the majority leader has indicated that he would be willing to work with the minority in developing the concept where the gas tax repeal would be subject to some amendments, including a technical amendment to be offered by the majority leader regarding previously purchased gas, an amendment to be offered by the Democratic leader or his designee, and then one to be offered by the majority leader or his designee. I know you have a