

# PROGRESSIVE MEDIA

## If The Chamber of Commerce Had Its Way ...

The Chamber of Commerce has been facing heat recently from all factions of government and its own membership over a number of its policy positions – from clean energy reform, to health care and financial regulation. The group is spending record amounts to influence policymakers in their attempts to block reform. In the third quarter alone they spent \$34.7 million -- [over \\$300,000 a day](#). In an interview with the [New York Times](#) yesterday, when discussing its lobbying efforts, Chamber President Tom Donohue said: *“People seem to listen to you more...when you’ve got a bagful of cash.”*

Below is a glimpse of policies we would see if the Chamber had its way.

**There Would Be No Investments In A Clean Energy Economy.** The Chamber of Commerce opposed the American Clean Energy and Security Act sponsored by Representatives Waxman and Markey. It continues to lobby to kill the Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act sponsored by Senators Kerry and Boxer, and has opposed all past energy reform bills including McCain-Lieberman in 2003 and 2005 and Lieberman-Warner in 2007. Clean energy and climate legislation like the Kerry-Boxer and Waxman-Markey bills would limit and reduce global warming pollution, and create a net increase of 1.7 million new jobs. [Climate Progress, [10/17/09](#)]

**There Would Be No Action To Stop Global Warming.** In an effort to ward off potentially sweeping federal emissions regulations, the Chamber of Commerce called for the Environmental Protection Agency to hold "the Scopes monkey trial of the 21st century" with hope of undercutting the scientific consensus over climate change. The Chamber threatened to take the fight to federal court if the EPA denied the request. [Los Angeles Times, [09/25/2009](#)]

**There Would Be No Health Care Reform.** The Chamber of Commerce is currently spending millions of dollars in advertisements and lobbying to derail current health reform legislation. The Chamber lobbied successfully to kill health reform under President Clinton in the 1990's. [CBS, [8/12/09](#); New Yorker, [10/19/09](#)]

**There Would Be No Paid Family Leave Despite This Year's H1N1 Epidemic.** The U.S. Chamber of Commerce opposes a bill proposing paid sick leave for workers who contract flu-like symptoms even in light of this year's H1N1 epidemic. Chamber Vice President Randel K. Johnson recently stated “the vast majority of employers provide paid leave of some sort. The problem is not nearly as great as some people say.” The fact is more than one-third of all workers don't get any paid sick leave. [New York Times, [11/03/09](#)]

**There Would Be No Regulation Of Wall Street To Prevent Another Financial Collapse.** The Chamber of Commerce has been one of the organizations leading the charge against the proposed Consumer Financial Protection Agency. The CFPA would set standards for traditional mortgages, restrict mortgages with hidden fees, enforce laws aimed at restricting banks from arbitrarily raising interest rates, and examine the practices of lenders and financial firms with risky products. [New York Times, [7/30/09](#); WonkRoom, [10/3/09](#)]

**Defense Contractors Could Continue to Deny Rape Victims Access to the Courts.** Sen. Al Franken offered a successful amendment to the Defense Appropriations bill that would withhold defense contracts to companies who prevent victims from filing lawsuits against sexual assault and harassment. The Politico noted that the Chamber of Commerce lobbied against the amendment. [Politico, [10/7/09](#)]

**There Would Be No Minimum Wage At All.** The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has argued that market forces alone should set wage scales. The Chamber has argued that living wage standards “put the interest of employees above all other considerations.” The Chamber lobbied against the latest increase in the minimum wage. [Fox News, [12/22/06](#); Quigley, [p 132](#)]

**Employers Could Easily Discriminate On Pay Based On Gender.** The Chamber of Commerce lobbied against the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which nullified an anti-labor 2007 Supreme Court decision by giving workers more time to file pay discrimination lawsuits. [Chamber, [1/14/09](#)]

**There Would Be No Occupational Safety And Health Administration.** In 1980, Richard Leshner, President of the U.S. Chamber of Congress, charged, "OSHA at best has been a major disappointment, at worst an abysmal failure." "To date, there has been no solid documentation that OSHA has yielded any gains in safety or health," said Leshner. [AP, 4/1/80]

**There Would Be No Consumer Protections Against Chemicals That Cause Miscarriages, Genital Defects, And Other Reproductive Health Risks.** The Chamber of Commerce aggressively lobbied against a ban against phthalates when Congress was debating the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act in 2008. According to a consumer safety report using CDC data, phthalates “are linked to reproductive health consequences, including miscarriages, endometriosis, male genital defects, low sperm count, and others.” The chemical gained notoriety when it was reported that Chinese toys sold in the U.S. contained it. [CAP, [7/21/09](#); OMB Watch, [12/2/08](#)]