

BUSINESSMEN ASK VOTING BILL VETO

Say Measure Gives Labor
Much Power—Reagan
Is Also Against It

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WASHINGTON, May 2—Big business is pressing President Ford to veto legislation reconstituting the Federal Election Commission, arguing that the bill gives too much political power to organized labor.

The National Association of Manufacturers and the United States Chamber of Commerce picked up a surprise ally in Ronald Reagan, who called for a veto although it would further delay payment of more than \$400,000 in Federal subsidies to his primary campaign.

Mr. Reagan charged in a national television broadcast last week that the campaign measure, which is expected to receive final Congressional clearance tomorrow, "would give the hierarchy of organized labor increased power to influence elections while limiting the rights of all others."

This view is not shared by some Congressional Republicans. Senator Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania and Representative Charles E. Wiggins of California, the Republican leaders on the conference committee that shaped the final compromise, have urged Mr. Ford to approve the bill.

Overriding Warning

The President discussed the question at the White House yesterday with Representative John J. Rhodes of Arizona, the Republican floor leader, who was reported to have warned him that the House might override any veto of the politically sensitive measure.

Directly at issue are provisions in the 30-page bill that limit the ways in which union and corporate political action committees can obtain contributions for campaign war chests that they then distribute among favored candidates.

Last year, the election commission ruled that corporate committees could solicit contributions from their employees, as long as no coercion was involved. Congressional Democrats wanted to prohibit any solicitation of employees but settled for a compromise.

Under the current bill, corporate committees could seek contributions from middle-management employees who are salaried rather than paid by the hour and who have "policy-making, managerial, professional or supervisory responsibilities."

Union political action committees are restricted to soliciting union members and their families.

Mail for Other Side

Both corporate and union committees are permitted to mail requests for political contributions twice a year to the opposite constituency—unions to corporation executives and stockholders, and corporations to union members—under a system in which the identity of contributors and noncontributors remains secret.

Corporate political action committees are a relatively recent development, and no one knows how powerful they may become in campaigns. Most union committees are well-established with a firm idea of how much they can raise and spend, and their leaders are fearful of giving corporate committees too much room in which to operate.

Mr. Reagan's overwhelming victory in the Texas primary yesterday could make his call for a veto more effective than it had earlier appeared. President Ford has tended on several occasions to move toward Reagan positions in an effort to retain conservative Republican support.

Statements of Intent

At their final session, the Senate-House conferees wrote into their report a number of statements of Congressional intent designed to meet objections raised by big business but the National Association of Manufacturers was not satisfied.

But John W. Gardner, chairman of Common Cause, a public affairs lobby, maintained in a statement urging Presidential approval: "In matters that raise the question of favoritism either to business or to labor, a sound compromise was reached. It is wholly inaccurate to describe the bill as favoring either side."

Ford legal advisers have urged the President not to decide on a veto until he has read the Congressional debate on the conference compromise. Final action is expected tomorrow in the House and tomorrow or Tuesday in the Senate.

They maintain that interpretations of the complex legislation made on the floor might wipe out statements of intent in the report, reversing the effect of the bill. When legislation is challenged in the courts, as seems likely in this case, judges rely heavily on debate and conference reports.