Teamsters Backs Recess Appointees; Business Lobby Issues ‘Red Alert’

By Kate Ackley
Roll Call Staff
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James Hoffa, general president of the Teamsters union, praised President Barack Obama’s recent recess nominations to the National Labor Relations Board.

Obama over the weekend named 15 recess appointees, including Craig Becker and Mark Pearce, who are considered controversial nominees for the NLRB. Obama took the recess route, he said, because “Republican obstruction” was preventing him from filling key administration jobs.

In a statement, Hoffa said that Becker and Pearce were both extremely well-qualified for the positions, which have been vacant for more than two years.

“We’re thankful that the President appointed two men who will work to restore fairness in the workplace,” Hoffa said in his statement. “Craig Becker is a good and decent man. He has earned a reputation for impartiality over a long and distinguished career. His views are well within the mainstream of labor law. It shouldn’t be forgotten that seven of the past eight NLRB members have been recess appointments.”

In his statement, Hoffa noted that because there have been only two members of the NLRB — a Democrat and a Republican — it has been deadlocked on many issues.

“It’s time for the NLRB to get on with its important work,” Hoffa said. “By appointing Craig Becker and Mark Pearce, President Obama will allow the board to finally move forward.”

Big-business organizations, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, ramped up their opposition to the recess appointments over the weekend.

The chamber’s senior vice president of labor, immigration and employee benefits, Randel K. Johnson, blasted Becker, who serves as associate general counsel to both the AFL-CIO and the Service Employees International Union.

“OPPORTUNITIES ARE KNOCKING.”

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nomination to the NLRB,” Johnson said in a statement. “Overriding the will of the Senate and providing this special interest payback contradicts the President’s claim to change the tone in Washington. The business community should be on red alert for radical changes that could significantly impair the ability of America’s job creators to compete.”

The chamber noted that this is the first time since 1993 that it has opposed an NLRB nominee. “The Chamber’s opposition is based on Mr. Becker’s prolific writings, which suggest a radical view of labor law that flies in the face of established precedent and case law and is far outside the mainstream,” Johnson added.