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Failed bill was not vague

A recent letter apologizing for Delegate J.D. Beane's actions to kill important health care legislation included a number of serious inaccuracies.

The letter, written by Mike Clowser, Contractors Association of West Virginia, was in regard to H.B. 2809, a bill my organization supported. It would have required tax funds earmarked for health care on public works construction projects actually go to health care.

In these time of rising health care costs H.B. 2809 offered a simple solution to part of the problem at no cost to tax payers. It was supported by a number of legislators, and groups representing workers, contractors and hospitals.

Clowser was in error when he wrote the bill was only one page long and hence left out important details. In fact the bill had four pages of details that answered many of the very questions he posed. Furthermore, it had specifics enough to gain the support of two House committees, each made up of 25 delegates in addition to a number of sponsors and other delegates.

Clowser incorrectly stated the bill created a state-sponsored health care program. It did not. H.B. 2809 would have required companies bidding on projects paid with your tax dollars to show that 75 percent of workers on the project would have private sector health care coverage.

Clowser also provided incorrect information when he wrote that 75 percent of premiums must be paid by employers. While an early version of the bill contained such language the bill that passed Beane's committee did not.

Perhaps most distressing was the fact Beane placed the bill on his committee's agenda and voted for the bill, only to sabotage it later. Pretending to support a bill only to kill it is bad policy.

Clowser claimed there was not enough time to deal with the bill but forgot to mention Beane stalled the bill for 10 days before taking it up.

Stalling a bill and then claiming there is not enough time is simply unfair.

Clowser pretends he supported the concept of the bill, but the facts are clear his group was the only opposition. To claim support for a bill, but work to kill it, is dishonest and a poor way to conduct business.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Steve White is director of the Affiliated Construction Trades Foundation.