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At Issue

Getting Employers into Member Grassroots Lobbying

Paid family leave. Mandatory paid rest breaks. Expensive health insurance coverage mandates.

It's mandates like these that make New Jersey such an expensive place to do business. Right now, legislation has been introduced and been approved by at least one legislative committee that would impose each one of these mandates on businesses.

Every day, our Government Affairs staff works hard fighting against these kinds of anti-business bills and so far, we have been able to keep these bills from becoming law. We are in constant contact with legislators and their staffs to keep bad bills from becoming law, or at least changing them to substantially soften the blow on businesses like yours. But the special interests in Trenton are also hard at work, and they have thousands of member volunteers to help them.

That's why we need your help. Member grassroots lobbying is effective because it puts legislators in touch with their constituents. No matter how persuasive our argument is, nothing carries the impact as a constituent business from a legislator's district. You are our greatest single resource in fighting these bills, and we want to make sure you have the opportunity to do just that.

We are asking you to sign up for our KEY PERSON RAPID RESPONSE TEAM. It is comprised of business leaders like you who have a personal relationship with a state legislator, or other key government official. Whether you are a friend, campaign contributor, business colleague or neighbor of an elected representative, we need your assistance. We know your time is valuable, so we will ask you to contact only those legislators you know personally, and do so only when it is absolutely essential.

When the Assembly or the Senate announces that one of its committees will hold a hearing to consider a piece of legislation that is detrimental to your company, we will notify you and ask that you contact a legislator who you know person-

ally. Perhaps you are a retailer who has an elected official as a customer, or you may be involved with a local community or political organization that has regular contact with a state legislator. On the tough issues, a personal phone call expressing your concerns could make all the difference.

The Rapid Response team is just one of the tools we use to deliver the business community's views to legislators.

There is our electronic Membership Alerts, which allows you to send a written e-mail to a legislator or a group of legislators with just a few mouse clicks of your computer. Over the course of the last year, thousands of you have e-mailed the Governor, state Senators and Assembly members over legislation that would disrupt the workplace and increase your cost of doing business in New Jersey.

By getting actively involved, you will become a vital participant in the governmental process that can seriously affect your company's economic viability. Many of you already are active NJBIA members who attend your monthly county Employer Legislative Committee (ELC) meeting, participate in our "Meet the Legislative Leaders" and "Meet the Decision Makers" breakfast series or have hosted a "Site Visit" with your local legislator.

The Rapid Response team will be another tool for building a better business climate in New Jersey. We hope that you will join us in working to ensure that the voices of New Jersey's business community are heard not only in the halls of the State Capitol, but in the cities and towns where you and your elected representatives live and work.

Please contact me at fr Robinson@njb ia.org or (609) 393-7707 ext. 225 if you are willing to become a member of our RAPID RESPONSE TEAM. You can also sign up by going to our Web site, www.njb ia.org.

Together, we have been successful in promoting the interests of the business community and in stopping a number of onerous state government mandates. Thank you for your continued participation and assistance. Working together, we can continue to have an important impact in Trenton. 