

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FLIP-FLOPS ON RETROACTIVE LEGISLATION

As you've likely heard, the Chamber of Commerce has officially endorsed government welfare to limit corporate risk. (Again.)

The head of the United States Chamber of Commerce said Friday that his group is not yet lobbying against legislative efforts to raise BP's liability cap, viewing the issue as not yet "ripe."

He signaled, however, that his group would figure out a way to get the government to share in the cost of cleaning up the Gulf Coast.

"It is generally not the practice of this country to change the laws after the game," said Tom Donohue, the president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. ". . . Everybody is going to contribute to this clean up. We are all going to have to do it. We are going to have to get the money from the government and from the companies and we will figure out a way to do that." [my emphasis]

And like an obedient orange puppy, John Boehner has embraced the Chamber's call for government welfare for corporations.

I do agree with Steve Benen that the Republican (and Mary Landrieu) embrace of big oil ahead of taxpayers ought to be a game changer.

But I'd also like to note how, um, opportunistic the Chamber is with its insistence that "it is generally not the practice of this country to change the laws after the game." This is what the Chamber wrote to pressure the House to

support a FISA amendment that invalidated a law holding telecoms liable for illegal wiretapping of private citizens.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing more than three million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region, strongly supports S. 2248, the "FISA Amendments Act of 2007," as passed by the Senate on February 12, 2008. The Chamber believes that this bill, in its current form, provides necessary, appropriate, and targeted relief commensurate with the threat to national security that arose in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks.

The Chamber represents companies across various industries which own or operate vital components of the nation's critical physical, virtual, and economic infrastructures. The federal government continually depends upon such industries for cooperation and assistance in national security matters, including homeland security programs and activities. The government also turns to these companies in times of crisis, when the speed, agility, and creativity of the private sector can be critical to averting a terrorist attack.

Therefore, the Chamber urges the House to consider S. 2248 and pass this

bipartisan compromise legislation. **The Chamber firmly believes that the immunity provisions in S. 2248 are imperative to preserving the self-sustaining “public-private partnership” that both Congress and the Executive Branch have sought to protect the United States in the post-September 11 world.**
[my emphasis]

Of course, the Chamber is being utterly consistent on one point. That’s in lobbying to make sure big corporations never pay for the negative consequences—be they legal or financial—of their actions.