96 P.L. 308

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD
Proceedings and Debates of the 96th Congress
LD-4(Rev.Nov.78)

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

BILL	DATE	PAGE(S)
H.R. 3567	June 25, 1980	E 3185-86

REMARKS: by Mr. Murphy

IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 3567

SPEECH OF

HON. AUSTIN J. MURPHY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 24, 1980

● Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak in support of H.R. 3567, the Soft Drink Interbrand Competition Act which, more importantly, is in support of independent small business. The passage of this act will clarify the standards by which the necessary licensing procedure can be properly judged in an effort to provide protection for the thousands of independent bottlers in the country. Without the protection of territorial licenses these independent businesses could well become swallowed up by huge corporate interests. The loss would have ramifications far beyond the bottling business alone.

If only large regional bottling plants under the control of a handful of big corporate interests were to provide soft drinks to retailers, we would soon find that the small grocery stores, especially the traditional mom and pop stores in so many of our small towns and rural areas, would find supplies sporadic and limited. The big corporate bottlers would find it more profitable to service only the massive grocery chains in our heavily populated areas at the expense of the rest of us.

In an era when we see the steady deterioration of small independent businesses under pressure from high volume, heavy cash flow corporations and a time when the small corner groceries are closing day by day under pressure from giant chains, we must preserve and protect those independent businesses that remain as an integral part of our American character.

Critics of this bill claim that its passage will stifle competition and that the consumer needs more choice in the product. The truth is just the opposite. The facts easily dispute such weak argument. You only have to visit any grocery store to see the rainbow variety of soft drinks on display in every city, town, and crossroads in the country. As for competition, the overwhelming majority of the 2,150 bottlers in this country are independently owned businesses operated by the men and women who are residents of the communities that they serve. In the interest of independent business that is the backbone of our free enterprise system, we have the obligation to provide adequate protection for their licensing rights against the encroachments of big impersonal corporate interests.●