



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on June 11, 2016

S.C. State Sen. Lee Bright Challenged by Chamber of Commerce for Opposing Crony Capitalism

South Carolina State Senator Lee Bright has always attracted the attention of the Republican Establishment.

In his latest row with members of his own party, Bright is being targeted by the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce in a series of radio ads claiming that the liberty-minded lawmaker is “full of hot air” and is “against job creation and economic development in South Carolina.”



At issue is Bright’s opposition to a roads bill that the Chamber of Commerce claims would improve roads and bridges that are purportedly crumbling and causing choking traffic.

Bright, however, insists that the bill will essentially benefit special interests, allowing big business to dictate law to the legislature, rather than the other way around.

In other words, the measure, as Bright portrays it, is another example of crony capitalism.

Simply put, crony capitalism is the use of the power of government to grant special favors to businesses which in turn support the legislators who work to assure that those companies have access to lucrative government contracts.

In the case of the roads bill in South Carolina, it’s easy to see how the state Chamber of Commerce would attack a lawmaker who dares interpose between big business and its protected place at the taxpayer-funded trough.

Bright is undaunted, however, in his pursuit of small government, free market economics, and constitutionally limited government — at any level.

In fact, when asked by a local TV station, Bright said he regards the Chamber of Commerce’s commercials as a “badge of honor.”

“When the special interests are willing to put that much effort and energy into opposing you, it means you matter,” he said.

Bright explained that when big business is allowed to assume the authority over lawmaking and policymaking, it is obvious that the people are no longer the ultimate sovereigns.

“The reason I ran for office,” he told WYFF-TV of Greenville, South Carolina, “is because I sat back and said, ‘I wish somebody would do something about this, that or the other,’ and people were afraid to touch those issues. I’m not afraid of them. I’m going to stand for what I believe and the voters get to decide.”

As noted libertarian Judge Jim Gray explains, “Among other things, Liberty means that government should not be favoring some businesses over others by choosing winners and losers in the marketplace. Instead, those choices should be made by customers.”



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Bright agrees — thus the threat felt by those who see government and the lawmaking process as a tool for protecting privilege and plumping the bottom line at the expense of free market competition.

Behind all the blustering and the attack ads, Bright thinks there is more than a desire to deliver millions in construction contracts to Establishment cronies. He believes he is being blasted because of his sponsorship of South Carolina’s version of the so-called Bathroom Bill.

In April, Bright introduced a bill mandating that multiple occupancy bathrooms be “designated for and only used by a person based on his biological sex.”

State Chamber of Commerce president Ted Pitts was quoted calling the proposal “unnecessary.”

“Sen. Bright is trying to create a political crisis that doesn’t exist to save his political career,” Pitts added.

Regardless of the real reason the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce is working to get Lee Bright out of the state senate and out of the way of their members getting fat on infrastructure largesse, Bright’s constituents can comfort themselves knowing that their elected representative would rather rankle the Establishment than compromise his commitment to principles of constitutional liberty and a free market economy.

Senator Bright is facing three Republican challengers in the election to be held on June 14.

Photo of State Senator Lee Bright: AP Images



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