Dear:

Let me give you the labor story as a member of the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare.

The so-called Kennedy-Ervin Labor-Management Reform Bill was pending in that committee for twenty days. Republican members made a determined effort to have it amended but inasmuch as there are nine Democrats and six Republicans on the Committee, most of the votes were on a party basis and we could not prevail.

This inadequate bill came to the floor of the Senate. Fifteen amendments were offered to cure its weaknesses, most of them from the Republican side. Only four amendments were adopted and these were not too significant. In this wholly inadequate form the bill passed the Senate by a vote of 90 to 1. This lopsided vote is often cited as a measure of how good this bill was. The real fact is that I and many others voted for it, for unless it passed the Senate, with all its deficiencies, and went to the House for further action, there would have been no labor legislation whatsoever.

The Landrum-Griffin Bill was approved by the House and messaged to the Senate with a request for a conference. The Conference Committee, consisting of members of both House and Senate, will consider both the Senate and House versions of this matter and endeavor to prepare and submit for further approval by both bodies a conference version. If this is consummated, the bill then goes to the President for further action. This is the whole story as of this moment.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen
Dear ...:

I deeply appreciate the complimentary reference in your message and also your expressed hope that the Conference can develop a sound and effective bill in the interest of the whole country. Let me assure you that I shall have no other consideration in mind than our national well-being in pursuing our responsibility in the Conference Committee.

With every good wish,

Everett McKinley Dirksen
... 1959

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Dear ...:

On April 25 the Senate completed action on the Labor Management Reform Act and by a vote of 99 to 1 sent it to the House for further consideration.

As a member of the Senate Labor Committee, I felt that the Committee bill was wholly inadequate in dealing with the problems in this field and was one of two members of the Committee who voted against the bill. After a week of discussion on the Senate Floor, some thirty-five amendments -- some of which were quite minor in character -- were adopted. However, there were substantial amendments included in the bill, including a modified version of the so-called Bill of Rights amendment, dealing basically with the rights of union members.

The bill was very materially improved and I am hopeful that the House will pick up where the Senate left off and add still other improvements to this measure.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen
..., 1959

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Dear ...:

I deeply appreciate your congratulatory message on the action taken by the Senate on the McClellan Amendments to the Labor Management Reform Bill.

I must, however, confide my real disappointment that despite the inclusion of thirty-five or more amendments the measure is still inadequate in dealing with abuses in the labor field, as disclosed by the McClellan Committee investigations, and in safeguarding the rights of workers.

It was necessary, however, to approve the bill despite its inadequacy in order to make certain that there would be an opportunity for the House of Representatives to give it further consideration in the hope that it can be materially improved.

I can assure you it is having sustained consideration.

With every good wish,

Everett McKinley Dirksen
July 29, 1959

Dear ---:

When the present session of Congress began in January there was a general hope both in Congress and in the country that a labor-management reform measure could be developed which would meet the problems and challenges in this field in all sections of the country.

It was hoped that a bill could be properly considered and enacted which would deal with finance reporting by labor organizations, clean and uninfluenced union elections, protection of the rights of the individual worker, a termination of black-mail picketing and secondary boycotts and also those administrative provisions which are necessary to the enforcement of an adequate measure.

After long hearings and long consideration in the Senate it was impossible to secure the necessary votes to write real strength into a reform bill. The Senate version, in my judgment, was entirely inadequate to meet the problem before us but we had no choice except to approve it and send it to the House for further consideration, for otherwise there would have been no bill whatsoever.

The action of the House Committee in reporting the Committee bill is equally disappointing and a substitute measure has been introduced which is more in line with the Administration recommendations to meet these various problems. Whether that substitute can command enough votes to be adopted remains to be seen.

The answer lies in one very simple fact and that is to secure sufficient votes in the House and Senate to adopt a bill which contains the necessary teeth. Speaking for myself, I intend to pursue this objective without fear or favor, and I am delighted to know that there has been such an upsurge of feeling all over the country as evidenced by the expressions which are reaching us now.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen
Dear ...:

Let me give you the labor story as a member of the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare.

The so-called Kennedy-Ervin Labor-Management Reform Bill was pending in that committee for twenty days. Republican members made a determined effort to have it amended but inasmuch as there are nine Democrats and six Republicans on the Committee, most of the votes were on a party basis and we could not prevail.

This inadequate bill came to the floor of the Senate. Fifteen amendments were offered to cure its weaknesses, most of them from the Republican side. Only four amendments were adopted and these were not too significant. In this wholly inadequate form the bill passed the Senate by a vote of 90 to 1. This lopsided vote is often cited as a measure of how good this bill was. The real fact is that I and many others voted for it, for unless it passed the Senate, with all its deficiencies, and went to the House for further action, there would have been no labor legislation whatsoever.

The substitute Landrum-Griffin Bill, pending in the House, more nearly represents the Administration views and comes closer to my views also.

If and when there is a conference with the House after it acts and I am a member of the Conference Committee, I shall do my very utmost within the limits of the authority of the Conference Committee to secure a far more adequate measure than the one which was approved by the Senate.

This is the whole story.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen
September 2, 1959

Mrs. Edna C. Olson  
Room 377  
United States Courthouse  
Chicago 2, Illinois  

Dear Edna:

Attached is a copy of the last labor letter we are sending out.

Regards,

John R. Gonien  
Administrative Assistant to  
Everett McKinley Dirksen
Dear ...

I intend to do my very best to secure a strong, fair, adequate labor bill.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen
Dear ...:

I presume Congressional action on the Labor-Management Disclosure and Reform Bill can be expressed in two or three paragraphs.

First the Senate passed what seemed to me and others to be an inadequate bill. The House on the other hand passed a rather stern measure which did contain some technical defects.

The Conference Committee, consisting of seven senators and seven congressmen, met for eleven days to compose these differences and to secure a bill that was at once fair, adequate and equal to the challenges in this field. The Conference Report which we developed passed the Senate by a vote of 93 to 2 and passed the House by a vote of 332 to 32. I believe this is a tribute to the labors of the Conference Committee and I feel rather proud of the job, having been one of the conferees.

With every good wish,

Everett McKinley Dirksen
Dear ....:

This will acknowledge the petition you signed relating to industry wide strikes.

As a member of the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare and having served through the House-Senate conference on the 1959 labor bill, I intend to have legislation ready for introduction early in January to meet problems such as those with which the country has been confronted in the steel situation.

I do appreciate your interest.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen