

Senate Hopeful Bowles Pushes For Enforcement Of Trade Pacts

Erskine Bowles, the leading candidate for the U.S. Senate seat in North Carolina, told a Hickory gathering he will not vote for another trade pact until enforcement of current agreements is undertaken.

At a luncheon that included hosiery executives, including Peter Menzies of Menzies-Southern Hosiery, Dan St. Louis, manager of the Hosiery Technology Center, and Paul Fogleman, publisher of Legwear Trends, Bowles covered trade agreements, healthcare costs, and budget issues.

"I sleep with the textiles industry every night," Bowles said, noting that his wife is chairman of Springs Industries with 15,000 employees.

Bowles' experience as a business person is reflected in his comments that indicate his grasp of financial and legislative issues. As Chief of Staff for President Clinton, he negotiated a balanced budget amendment that produced the first U.S. budget surplus in 35 years. Currently the U.S. budget is running a deficit that is expected to top \$800 billion.

Bowles lost a bid for the Senate in 2002 when he was defeated by Senator Elizabeth Dole. He said he and Dole have a good working relationship and that her husband, former U.S. Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole, is a personal friend.

Bowles will face U.S. Rep. Richard Burr in the fall. Burr is a supporter of free trade and has backed the initiatives from the White House.

Powerful Senator Visits Alabama Hosiery Center

U.S. Senator Richard Shelby, a member of the powerful Finance Committee, recently visited Fort Payne, Alabama, to re-enforce his commitment to the future of the hosiery industry.

The town meeting format was staged in the knitting operations of V.I. Prewett and Son. Hundreds of hosiery owners, executives, personnel and their families turned out to welcome Sen. Shelby and show their support for his reelection.

Charles Cole, president of The Hosiery Association and head of Alabama Footwear, and Bobby Cole, president of Prewett Associated Mills, presented the senator with a plaque expressing industry appreciation for his efforts.

Sen. Shelby was instrumental in pushing for country-of-origin labeling to be placed on the front of packaging for socks. "I will continue to work for you," Shelby asserted. "We cannot let socks go overseas."