

Thompson fights for small business

Written by Sean Green

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Representative wins award for his voting record this past session

Louisiana's association that represents more than 5,000 small businesses across the state has presented state Rep. Jeff Thompson, R-Bossier City, with a prestigious award for his strong support for small business.

The National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) presented Thompson with the Guardian of Small Business Award in recognition of his efforts to support small business issues in this year's legislative session. Given only once every four years, the Freshman Guardian of Small Business award is the most prestigious honor that NFIB bestows on a freshman legislator.

“You don't know ahead of time what the issues will be. You're out there on the fly with your research having to decide what's best for business. I'm honored to receive the award,” said Thompson.

Thompson earned a 100 percent NFIB/Louisiana voting record in this year's legislative session and was also one of the Representatives to receive the highest score from the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry — 97 percent — during the 2012 legislative session.

These voting records are a reflection of his longstanding support of business in the community with the chamber of commerce and economic development.

“I want to see our state continue to be a place that welcomes and promotes business opportunities and the small business owner. Small businesses are the backbone of our state,” said Thompson.

Major issues he voted on that reflected his ranking were education reform for workforce, opportunities for tax relief, making a consistent tax base, and identifying a system that gets rid of bureaucracy and size of government.

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“Every dollar a tax payer pays to run their business or the government in taxes is a dollar they don't have to invest in their equipment, employees, or community,” said Thompson.

During the last legislative session, he reached out to businesses in different spheres to see how proposed legislation would affect them.

“Looking back, people wonder how we passed (more than) 860 laws. My job was to kill the other 1,200 proposed laws that would have a negative impact and to improve those that were proposed so they had no unintentional (negative) impact later,” said Thompson.

With the current economic uncertainty, Thompson sees that support becoming more crucial than ever.

“Competition for jobs will become brutal,” he said. “For the small business people, you're going to need a good environment just to protect the jobs you have now. It's the small things in the margin that help the business owner and their employees survive and we're going to have to continue to protect.”

He sees small businesses and family interests will be at the forefront of next year's session with the governor looking at tax reform and education reform.

“Doesn't do us any good to attract jobs if we know we can't provide skilled workers for them,” said Thompson.

He personally hopes to unveil legislation concerning employees acquiring an interest in their employer's business.

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out of state, and next thing you know you have jobs being lost, tax dollars lost with property sitting there vacant,” said Thompson.

Visit www.labi.org/legislature-info/legislators to see the LABI rankings for all state officials.

Thompson, who was elected in 2011, represents the 8th District and served on the committees of Commerce, Education, Retirement, and Homeland Security, as well as the Special Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs. He has since been appointed to serve on the Committee on Ways and Means.