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This is Phil Arnot for Community Comment on KINS Radio.

I read an article recently by Henry Juskiewicz who is President and CEO of Gibson Guitar Corporation. They operate mainly out of the State of Tennessee where they have their guitar factories. What occurred last year was without warning. Thirty Federal Agents with guns and bullet proof vests stormed those factories. They shut down production, sent workers home, seized boxes of raw materials and nearly one hundred guitars and ultimately cost Gibson Guitar Company two to three million dollars ^{by losing} the products and lost productivity. The President says "why", because they imported wood from India to make guitars in America.

Gibson Guitars has created more than five hundred and eighty jobs in the last two years, but the Federal Government wants to curtail that employment record. According to this article that August raid was made under the Lacey Act which was originally enacted as a means to curb the poaching of endangered species. The law bans wildlife and plants from being imported if according to the interpretation of the Federal bureaucrats that importation violates a law. The fingerboards of the Gibson Guitars are made with wood that is imported from India. The wood that was seized last year, however, was from a forest Stewardship Council certified supplier, meaning the wood complies with the law. As it was harvested legally and in compliance with traditional and civil rights among other protections. Authorities from India have provided sworn statements approving the shipment and the US Customs allowed the shipment to pass through America's borders to the guitar factories.

However, the US Fish and Wildlife Service decided that their interpretation was more appropriate saying that the fingerboards weren't finished in India and therefore they were an illegal export. This is like forcing Gibson Guitar to out source the jobs of finishing the work on the fingerboards instead of furnishing jobs in Tennessee.

This is an over reach of government authority and indicative of the kinds of burdens the Federal Government routinely imposes on growing businesses.

There is a bill pending in Congress that should revamp the Lacey Law and reserve costly criminal proceedings for those acts that threaten public safety or endanger our neighborhoods.

As Mr. Juskiewicz says in this article, ^{that} "policy makes must stop criminalizing capitalism". This begins by stopping the practice of creating new criminal offenses, or wielding obscure foreign laws, as a method of regulating business. ✓

I leave you with a point to ponder. Don't you think where the government has spent millions of taxpayer dollars on the Gibson Factory raids, investigating an India law India said that they didn't break is an over reach of government authority and an abuse of taxpayer dollars?

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