

**Greetings and Happy New Year, everyone. I've prepared a brief legislative update for the NAMME Board and the membership. If you could kindly distribute this information throughout the regions I'd be most appreciative!**

**Also please, if your region has not appointed a legislative affairs chair, consider doing so immediately. It is truly critical to NAMME's success!**

**Thank you!**

**Lisa**

### **January 2007 Legislative Update**

Democrats formally took control of the US Congress at noon on Thursday, January 7, 2007. As expected, Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Harry Reid (D-NV) became House speaker and Senate majority leader, respectively. Representative John Boehner (R-OH) became House minority leader and Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) was elected to the same post in the Senate.

Democrats in both chambers have insisted since the November election that the first 100 hours of the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress would move rapidly to address hot button issues such as Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 appropriations, minimum wage, ethics and oversight of the Iraq war.

Much of the federal government remains funded at FY 2006 levels under a continuing resolution that was passed just before the close of the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress in December. This funding mechanism does not expire until February 15, 2007. As previously reported, health education programming, including Centers of Excellence and Health Careers Opportunity Program funding, are included under the continuing resolution. Under previous legislation, these programs, and others, were marked for near elimination. Incoming House and Senate Appropriations Chairmen, Representative David Obey (D-WI) and Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV) have issued a joint statement that they intend to extend the current continuing resolution through the end of the fiscal year, with minor adjustments. It is unclear if health education programming will receive any additional funding under a new resolution, though it is unlikely that funding for key programs would be restored under such a provision. ***I will provide an update to NAMME as soon as this becomes clear with instructions on how we might further impact FY 2007 spending.***

It is worthy to note that several issues are at play in the current political environment and it may prove difficult to capture Congress's attention on lower profile issues.

- President Bush is expected to submit a \$100 billion war supplemental to the new Congress. Historically Congress has provided this funding; although it is not included in the formal budget, nor is it counted toward the administration's deficit calculations. It is unclear how the new Congress will respond to the funding request, given the war's increasing unpopularity.
- President Bush's State of the Union address, to be given on January 23, will be followed by an early February release of his proposed FY 2008 budget. The president has indicated that this budget proposal will seek to begin balancing the federal budget by 2012, which may loosely translate into dramatic cuts to domestic discretionary spending.
- While this Congress has opened with promises of bipartisanship, some tensions have already flared about the proposed tightening of ethics rules. Presently the single item on which the president and the new Congress have publicly agreed is the full disclosure of "earmarks" in all legislation, in which members of Congress can create narrowly targeted provisions benefiting small groups or businesses. Tensions are expected to rise as Democrats began to push their agenda.

There are many new members of Congress and encourage everyone to become more familiar with their members, new and old. There are great resources online to find members, write letters and follow legislation.

**General Information:**

[www.Congress.org](http://www.Congress.org) is a great website that includes specific information about members of Congress, their staff, committee assignments and office locations. Letters may also be sent to your Members and Senators directly through the site.

[www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) and [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) are gateway links to each Congressional chamber. Congressional work schedules and district period calendars are available, as are links to your member's or senator's website.

<http://thomas.loc.gov/> provides nearly real time information on legislative activity through the Library of Congress. Introduced legislation and voting records can be found on this site. Historical data from previous Congress' is also available.

**Capital Hill Switchboard: 202-224-3121** A call to this number with a simple request to be transferred to your House member or Senator (you must give the specific name) will connect you to those offices.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Submitted by Lisa Greenhill  
NAMME Legislative Chair  
[Lgreenhill@aavmc.org](mailto:Lgreenhill@aavmc.org)