

Headlines from the Hill

Patton attends ceremonies to celebrate opening of 110th Congress

By Carlos Jackson

IN JANUARY, the 110th session of the United States Congress convened amid the pomp and circumstance of an historic first in American government. Democrats elected Representative Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) as the first female speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, making Pelosi the third-ranking official in the federal government.

ANA President Rebecca Patton, MSN, RN, CNOR, proudly represented nurses on Capitol Hill by attending events organized to celebrate the election of Speaker Pelosi and the new Democratic majority in Congress. President Patton spent quality time fostering relationships with the House Democratic leadership team and freshman members supported by ANA during the 2006 elections. The swearing-in events provided a good opportunity to educate these new members on ANA's legislative and regulatory policy goals, as well as the challenges facing the nursing community and the direct impact nurses have on our nation's healthcare delivery system.

With healthcare issues expected to be a prominent piece of the congressional agenda, a number of proven nurse advocates have assumed influential positions in the 110th Congress. In the Senate, one of ANA's longtime champions, Ted Kennedy (D-MA), is once again the Chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

In the House, members of the House Nursing Caucus ascended to key posts on the powerful Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce Committees. Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY) is the new Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, while Rep. Fortney "Pete" Stark (D-CA) is now at the top of the panel's Health Subcommittee. Rep. Frank Pallone (D-NJ) will head Energy and Commerce's Health Subcommittee, which also includes Rep. Lois Capps (D-CA), a registered nurse and Nursing Caucus co-founder. Meanwhile, Rep. John Dingell (D-MI), another longtime friend of nurses and currently the longest-serving member of the House, regained the chairmanship of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

ANA will continue to work with these and other Congressional leaders to ensure that issues important to the nursing community are adequately addressed in what should be an exciting session of Congress.

Carlos Jackson is Senior Political Action Specialist for ANA's Department of Government Affairs.

ANA wants YOU! Apply to N-PAL today!

By Rachel Conant

THE ANA IS LOOKING for a few good nurses to represent ANA and the nursing community on Capitol Hill. The early days of the first session of the 110th Congress are the perfect time to get involved in ANA's Nurse Political Action Leaders (N-PAL) program. The great aspect of this program is that you can have your voice heard in Washington without coming to Washington!

Along with our Nurses Strategic Action Team (N-STAT), N-PAL promotes grassroots action—nurses reaching out to their elected officials on issues of concern to their profession and patients. The N-PAL program is the heart of ANA's efforts to ensure that members of Congress hear the voice of nursing. What we are looking for in N-PAL applicants:

Who: Any member of a constituent member association (CMA) with an interest in and commitment to nursing and public policy is eligible. CMA members with a personal connection to their legislator are especially encouraged to apply.

Job description: ANA members chosen as N-PAL leaders will be ANA's local liaisons to federal legislators and legislative staff in assigned legislative districts. Duties include communicating with the legislator or staff via visits, letters, phone calls, and e-mails; attending town-hall meetings, forums, and coffee hours with the legislator; and assisting ANA by attending political events or other opportunities as requested. After approval as an N-PAL, members will receive educational materials on the legislative process and other helpful tools and techniques necessary to effectively influence elected officials through grassroots advocacy.

Coordinated grassroots advocacy is key to ANA's continued success in the future. ANA must be able to mobilize N-PALs in every congressional district throughout the country to be effective and succeed in the healthcare arena.

Interested?: For more information on the N-PAL program, please contact us at gova@ana.org or visit our website at www.anapoliticalpower.org. ★

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