



The Politics of Caring

2004 Election Recap

While the 2004 elections now seem distant, the visibility the ANA gained for nursing issues reminds us that, regardless of winners and losers, nurses' activism will be remembered for years to come.

In the 2003–2004 election, the ANA endorsed 99 congressional candidates. Despite losses in some close races, the ANA's Political Action Committee, ANA-PAC, scored an impressive 82% rate of winners in candidates it endorsed who will now serve in the 109th Congress. Some of the outstanding ANA-PAC-supported candidates who will become freshman members of Congress in January include Senators Ken Salazar (D-CO) and Barack Obama (D-IL) and Representatives John Salazar (D-CO), Virginia Foxx (R-NC), and Allyson Schwartz (D-PA).

These freshmen will be joined by many longtime friends of nursing, including Senators Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) and Arlen Specter (R-PA) and Representatives Rob Simmons (R-CT), Dennis Moore (D-KS), and Lois Capps (D-CA).

Once again, ANA-PAC's funding contributed to the success of many candidates. Because of aggressive fundraising, ANA-PAC was able to give candidates an average contribution nearly double that of the 2001–2002 in the 2003–2004 cycle. The total amount raised was more than \$825,000.

As the ANA looks toward the 2005–2006 election, ANA-PAC will intensify its efforts in ensuring that nurses' voices will continue to be heard. Once more, the ANA will be a leader in the health care community as a political force to contend with in many high-profile campaigns as Republicans and Democrats fight for control of Congress.

Shari Dexter is the ANA-PAC coordinator, Erin McKeon is assistant director of the ANA's Department of Government Relations, and Sue Whittaker is associate director of the ANA's State Government Relations Department at the ANA.

The ANA and CMAs Partners on Legislative, Environmental Issues

The ANA, along with constituent member associations (CMAs), continues to be an advocate for nurses and patients in state legislatures. Two initiatives being promoted in the coming year are environmental health and safe patient handling and movement. In June, the ANA received, through the American Nurses Foundation, a one-year grant of \$150,000 from the Beldon Fund to support a day-long environmental health session at the September meeting of ANA and CMA lobbyists, who also met with national representatives of environmental health organizations at an ANA-hosted reception to explore ways the organizations could work together on state legislative initiatives on environmental health and other issues important to nurses.

The Beldon grant also has provided funding for staff support related to state legislative environmental health issues. To expand on the work begun at the lobbyist meeting, Health Care Without Harm just announced the opportunity for CMAs to apply for a minigrant; such grants are intended to increase the involvement of nurses on environmental health issues.

Lobbyists also are working on state legislation to protect nurses against musculoskeletal injuries. Ten CMAs have committed to move forward in 2005 on initiatives that would ensure facilities are implementing programs to prevent workplace injury in nurses.

To see the legislative and regulatory victories, click on ANA's NursingWorld Web site: www.nursingworld.org/gova/state.htm.

By working on the Nationwide State Legislative Agenda and other issues, the ANA and the CMAs have not only increased awareness of health care issues for policymakers but have also led the way in providing solutions.

FY 2005 Funding Bill Signed into Law

On December 8, 2004, President Bush signed the FY 2005 omnibus spending bill into law (P.L. 108-447). This 3,000-page, nine-bill act included, among other things, final funding amounts for augmenting development of the nursing workforce (Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act) and research (the National Institute for Nursing Research [NINR]).

Title VIII received a \$9 million (6%) increase, to bring total FY 2005 funding to just under \$151 million. The National Nurse Corps, which includes the Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program and the Nursing Scholarship Program, received an increase of \$4.7 million. The Nurse Education, Practice and Retention Grant Program, which includes funding for facilities to implement the Magnet criteria for nursing administration, career ladder programs, and programs to expand enrollment in baccalaureate nursing programs, also received a \$4.7

million increase. The remaining programs within Title VIII (advanced education nursing, nursing workforce diversity, geriatric nurse training, and nurse faculty loan) were cut by 0.8%. This reduction results from the fact that the congressional negotiators were forced to cut all nondefense, non-home-land security programs by 0.8%, in order to keep total funding within defined budget caps. The NINR received a \$3 million (2%) increase, to bring total FY 2005 funding to \$138 million.

The ANA is working to secure an increase in FY 2006 funding for Title VIII and NINR. The ANA is requesting \$59 million (40%) more for Title VIII, to bring the total funding to \$210 million. Visit www.anapoliticalpower.org to help. The 2006 fiscal year begins October 1, 2005. ▼