

## January 2008 ACSM Government Affairs Update

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**COFPAES Public Policy Meeting.** COFPAES recently held its first Design/Construction/Geospatial Community on Legislation and Public Policy Meeting. The meeting was the first of a new series of meetings that COFPAES will host for design, construction and geospatial professionals to discuss legislation and federal regulations that affect them and to hear from Congressional or agency speakers discussing topics of interest. Curt Sumner and Laurence Socci attended the meeting on behalf of ACSM. The speaker for the first meeting was Assistant Secretary of the Army John Paul Woodley. Secretary Woodley gave a detailed discussion on how the federal budget will play a role in the many Army Corp of Engineers projects, particularly those relating to water. After a short question and answer session, and the departure of Secretary Woodley, the remaining attendees discussed the possibility of forming a coalition to monitor and advocate design, construction and geospatial issues in the federal government. This coalition will not be as formal or on the same level as COFPAES. Stay tuned for more information on this developing coalition.

**QBS Repeal Bill Filed in New Jersey.** Legislation was recently introduced in the New Jersey legislature that would repeal an existing law under which New Jersey State architectural, engineering, and land surveying contracts are awarded pursuant to a competitive negotiation process. Under the new bill's provisions these contracts would be competitively bid. The bill's number is S. 484 and was introduced on January 8, 2008 by State Senator Shirley Turner. State Senator Turner introduced similar legislation in the past two sessions and the legislation did not pass either time. COFPAES and ACSM will be following this bill.

**H.R. 3634, the STEP Act --- Loan Forgiveness for Engineering Students.** Legislation was recently introduced in Congress to establish and determine the eligibility of individuals for a loan forgiveness program for professional engineers in order to provide incentives for engineers currently employed and engineering students and other students pursuing or considering pursuing a degree in science, technology and engineering, and for the support of students pursuing such secondary and postsecondary education.

The bill is sponsored by Representative Emmanuel Cleaver and was referred to the Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness. The bill amends the Higher Education Act of 1965 to authorize the Secretary of Education to award renewable one-year Strategic Technology/Engineering Program

(STEP) scholarships to students who pursue undergraduate or graduate degrees in engineering, technology, applied sciences, mathematics, or similar fields.

It also authorizes the Secretary to provide student loan forgiveness to borrowers under the Federal Family Education Loan and Direct Loan programs who agree to remain employed as engineers for at least eight years and obtain licensure as professional engineers within eight years of obtaining a degree.

We are in the process of meeting with staff from Rep. Cleaver's office to provide language in the bill to include surveying students in the program.

**National Surveyor's Week Resolution Update.** As you may know Resolutions honoring surveyors by recognizing National Surveyors' Week were introduced in the House and the Senate. The House bill number is H. Con. Res. 223 and currently has 13 co-sponsors. The Senate bill number is S. Con. Res. 57. Now that Congress is back from its extended holiday recess, we will be working hard to push both of these resolutions through Congress. You can help by contacting your Representative and asking them to co-sponsor H. Con. Res. 223. Also, contact your Senators and ask them to co-sponsor S. Con. Res. 57. Let's get both of these resolutions through Congress this year.

**PAC Auction in Spokane --- we need your donations!** We are still accepting donations for the PAC Auction to be held March 6 in Spokane as part of the Spring Conference. The PAC Auction is our only fundraiser for the ACSM/NSPS Political Action Committee. With this year being an election year, and with the many issues we are facing in Congress, we expect the PAC to be particularly active this year. Your donations and participation in the auction are greatly appreciated.

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