VETERINARIANS & LEGISLATIVE ISSUES
Ted Cohn, DVM
CVMA Convention 2012

AGENDA
- Advocacy-Why get involved?
- AVMA Governmental Relations Division
- 112th Legislative Priorities

Why Should I Get Involved in Advocacy?
The 1st Amendment Gives People the Right to Petition the Government to Change Laws or Policies

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**
MEMBERS OF CONGRESS WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

In a recent AVMA survey, 84% of members indicated that legislation favorable to veterinarians is essential for professional success. 79% stated their membership renewal was to help support legislative activities relevant to veterinary medicine.

SURVEY SAYS......

TOP 6 ADVOCACY STRATEGIES TO HAVE A POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON A MEMBER OF CONGRESS’ DECISIONS
**Advocacy Strategies**

1. In-Person Visits from Constituents
2. Contact from a Constituent Who represents other Constituents
3. Individualized Postal Letters
4. Individualized Email Messages
5. Phone Calls
6. Comments During a Telephone Town Hall

**What Do They Want to Hear?**

- Impact the bill will have on the district or state
- Constituent’s reasons for supporting/opposing the bill or issue
- Personal story related to the bill or issue
IT’S ALL ABOUT……

- Personal Contact

- Relationship Building

AVMA GRD

- Advocates the Association’s policies and positions on federal legislative and regulatory issues that influence animal and human health and advance the veterinary medical profession.
- 9 employees, including a PAC manager and grassroots coordinator

The AVMA’s GRD
TOOLS OF INFLUENCE-AVMA

DIRECT LOBBYING
- Director/Assistant
- Directors/Consultant
- Lobby specific issues approved by the AVMA Executive Board
- 60-80% of time on the Hill or in Executive Branch Offices
- Relationship building—meeting with Members/Staff

HELPING TO SPREAD THE MESSAGE

“Congress needs experts from the real world to inform them so they can make proper decisions on behalf of their constituents. Associations are often the best source for this expertise.”

Former Rep. Bill Clinger (R-PA)
GRASSROOTS

“All tyranny needs to gain a foothold is for people of good conscience to remain silent”
-Thomas Jefferson

GRASSROOTS

- AVMA Congressional Advocacy Network
  - All politics are local
  - Goal: AVMA Champion in every congressional district
  - Network to advocate on behalf of the AVMA
  - Join: http://avmacan.avma.org/avma/home/

COALITIONS

- Coalitions are formed in the hopes of capitalizing on strength in numbers and the strengths of each member.
- A broad-based coalition can help small organizations reach more legislators and get the legislative leadership's attention.
- A coalition often creates new relationships and establishes alliances that serve various purposes.
- The united front of a coalition is more likely to impress decision makers and the news media.
**Political Action Committees (PAC)**

- Name commonly given to a private group, organized to elect political candidates or to advance the outcome of a political issue or legislation.
- First established in 1944
- Under the Federal Election Campaign Act, an organization becomes a "political committee" by receiving contributions or making expenditures in excess of $1,000 for the purpose of influencing a federal election.

**Benefits of PACs**

- Opportunity to help elect candidates who understand veterinary medicine
- Access to relationship building opportunities
- Political credibility for profession

**AVMAPAC**

- Overseen by a 6 member board of AVMA volunteers
- Solicits contributions from AVMA members
  - Approximately $525,000 per two year congressional cycle
  - Approximately 2-3% of AVMA members contribute
AVMAPAC

- Contributes to Members of Congress and congressional candidates
  - Bipartisan
  - Specific criteria for contribution selection
  - Supportive of the AVMA’s Legislative Agenda and the veterinary profession

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED

AVMAGRD Externship Program
- 3rd and 4th year veterinary students
- 4 week rotation at the GRD
- Introduces externs to public policy and advocacy
- $1200 stipend
- [http://www.avma.org/advocacy/get_involved/externships.asp](http://www.avma.org/advocacy/get_involved/externships.asp)

AVMA Fellowship Program
- Serve for one year in Washington D.C. as scientific advisors to members of Congress
- Play pivotal roles in shaping public policy
- Stipend approximately $75,000
- [http://www.avma.org/advocacy/get_involved/fellowships/default.asp](http://www.avma.org/advocacy/get_involved/fellowships/default.asp)
AVMA LEGISLATIVE AGENDA
112TH CONGRESS

Agenda Actions Recommended by Legislative Advisory Committee
Approved by Executive Board

AVMA Legislative Scoring System

- Active Pursuit of Passage
- Support
- Nonsupport
- Active Pursuit of Defeat
- No Action

AVMA LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Active Pursuit of Passage

- 2012 Farm Bill reauthorization
- FY 2013 Appropriations
- S. 1281 Horse Transportation Safety Act
- S. 518 Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program Enhancement Act
- H.R. 525 Veterinary Public Health Amendments Act
- S. 1053 Veterinary Services Investment Act

AVMA LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Active Pursuit of Defeat

- H.R. 1406 Fairness to Pet Owners Act
- H.R. 2966/S. 1176 American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act
- H.R. 965/S. 1211 Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (PAMTA)
Active Pursuit of Passage

2012 Farm Bill
- Reauthorize
  - Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment program
  - Food Animal Residue Avoidance Databank
  - Disease Research/1433 Formula Funding
  - Agriculture and Food Research Institute

2012 Farm Bill
- Authorize
  - Veterinary Services Grant Program (Veterinary Services Investment Act)
  - Language to prohibit any person from knowingly attending an animal fighting venture or causing a minor to attend such a venture
  - Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research
  - Language prioritizing research for the Minor Use Animal Drug Program
**FY 2013 APPROPRIATIONS PRIORITIES**

- Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP)
- Food Animal Residue Avoidance Databank (FARAD)
- Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)
- Agriculture and Food Research Initiative
- National Animal Health Lab Network
- Minor Use Animal Drug Program

**S. 1281 HORSE TRANSPORTATION SAFETY ACT**

- Amends title 49 of the US Code to prohibit the transportation of horses in interstate transportation in a motor vehicle containing two or more levels stacked on top of one another.


- Amends the Animal Welfare Act to prohibit any person from knowingly attending an animal fighting venture or causing a minor to attend such a venture
- Similar language has been added to the Senate passed Farm Bill and the House Ag Committee Farm Bill
**S. 518 Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program Enhancement Act**

- Amends IRS Code to make loan repayment awards disbursed under section 1415A of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 – the VMLRP exempt from gross income and employment taxes.

**H.R. 525 Veterinary Public Health Amendments Act**

- Adds veterinary public health as an eligible grantee for public health workforce grants, and makes veterinarians studying public health eligible for Public Health Workforce Loan Repayment Program.

**S. 1053 Veterinary Services Investment Act**

- Establishes a matching grant program to develop, implement, and sustain veterinary services.
  - This bill language was in the Senate and the House Ag Committee passed Farm Bill (Veterinary Services Grant Program).
**Active Pursuit of Defeat**

**H.R. 1406 FAIRNESS TO PET OWNERS ACT**
- Mandates prescription writing for small animal practitioners
- Requires providing a written disclosure that the prescription may be filled elsewhere
- Requires prescriber to verify the prescription electronically or by other means

**H.R. 1406 FAIRNESS TO PET OWNERS ACT**
- 5 Cosponsors
- FTC outreach to the AVMA
  - Pet Medications Workshop: October 2nd
  - Asking for responses to questions
  - [http://www.ftc.gov/opa/2012/06/petmedswksp.shtm](http://www.ftc.gov/opa/2012/06/petmedswksp.shtm)
H.R. 2966/S. 1176 AMERICAN HORSE SLAUGHTER PREVENTION ACT

- Prohibit the shipping, transporting, moving, delivering, receiving, possessing, purchasing, selling, or donation of horses and other equines to be slaughtered for human consumption.

OTHER INITIATIVES

- GHLIT: Working with legislators to ensure that “bonafide association plans” are permitted as part of the healthcare reform law.
  - Without this designation, GHLIT’s underwriter (New York Life) would have to write policies for all individuals (not just AVMA members and their families).
  - NY Life is not structured to write such policies, and would have to end their relationship with the GHLIT.

OTHER INITIATIVES

- DEA
  - The DEA regional offices in Sacramento and Seattle are contacting registrant veterinarians who have a residential address listed as their principal place of business to verify that the home address is the correct registration address (i.e., a business), and to remind them that transport of controlled substances is a violation of the Controlled Substances Act (CSA).
  - AVMA has been working with the State VMAs to address this issue with the regional offices.
OTHER INITIATIVES

- DEA
  - AVMA GRD has been working with DEA in Washington DC to express our concerns about this issue. The Washington, DC office and the field offices have stated that they will use enforcement discretion.
  - AVMA is working with Congressman Schrader’s office to develop a legislative fix for this issue.

Questions?