

2008 Georgia Employer Committee Washington Trip Recap

In spite of the frigid Washington weather, this year's Georgia Employer Committee Executive Board legislative trip proved to be another successful and informative event.

The trip began with a legislative briefing meeting in which several issues and bills were discussed and reviewed. Two new board members joined in on the trip this year, Mr. Charles Craig of our Toccoa/Northeast Georgia committee and Mr. Lee Whetstone of our Newnan/Coweta County committee.

Members of Congress commended our board members for their efforts in keeping the Georgia Employer Committees active and still in existence. They shared the importance of having business and government work together to solve workforce issues.

Some of our Georgia representatives' schedules unfortunately did not allow them to meet with our Board Members, however they did meet with the representatives' labor legislative assistants. The legislative assistants for the most part were receptive of the issues and attentive. Representatives' aides vowed to share the information with their respective Congressmen.

The board members did meet with the following representatives:

Rep. John Linder, Rep. Lynn Westmoreland, Rep. Paul Broun, Rep. Nathan Deal, Rep. Phil Gingrey, Rep. John Barrow, Senator Saxby Chambliss and Senator Johnny Isakson.

Legislative issues that were discussed included the following:

1. Expansion of the Family and Medical Leave Act

- * Paid FMLA Leave (S 1681)
- * Paid Sick Leave (H 1542/ S 910)
- * Expand FMLA Coverage To Employers With Less Than 50 Employees. (H 1369)

2. ADA Restoration Act

The ADA Restoration Act (H 3195/S 1881).

3. Elimination of Caps on Punitive and Compensatory Damages under Civil Rights Laws. (S 1928)

4. WARN Act Expansion (H 3662/S 1792)

5. (Rep. Lewis –HB 2159/Sen. Kennedy-S 2554)

A bill to restore, reaffirm, and reconcile legal rights and remedies under civil rights statutes.

For more information on these and other proposed, debated and passed bills you may access the information by going to www.thomas.gov.

In closing, I would like to thank our Georgia Employer Committee Executive Board members who took the time out of their busy schedules to go to Washington and share the concerns of Georgia employers with our Georgia delegation.

Our representatives in Washington acknowledged the fact that the partnership that exists between our Georgia Department of Labor and our Employer Committees in Georgia is vital to the future workforce in Georgia and indeed is something to be proud of.

Although there is never a guarantee that legislation on the issues discussed will be passed, the trip offers the opportunity to share with our Georgia representatives in Washington issues and concerns of proposed legislation and the affect that the legislation would have on Georgia employers.

The trip also affords our Georgia representatives a network of hands on employers who can be used as resources when needing feedback or assistance from businesses in their local districts.

And last but not least the opportunity to share the benefits and existence of our Georgia Employer Committees that we are so proud of!