

## **New Congress. New White House. New RADPAC Opportunities.**

In November 2008 I received the baton of RADPAC Chair from Dr. James Thrall. Under Dr. Thrall's leadership, RADPAC reached new heights in the number of ACRA contributors, contribution dollars received from ACRA members, and contributions made to federal candidates. I will no doubt have big shoes to fill but I look forward to the opportunities that lie ahead.

With the newly-elected 111<sup>th</sup> Congress comes an even larger Democratic majority in both the House and Senate, as well as a Democrat in the White House in President Barack Obama, resulting in broad Democratic control for the first time in 16 years. While it is still much too early to determine what specific changes we will see in this new political environment in Washington, D.C., we do anticipate that healthcare reform will be one of the top legislative priorities in the next several months.

In addition to continuing the education process through RADPAC's established relationships with many Members of Congress, we must initiate the educational process with more than 75 newly-elected, first time Members of Congress who will begin their congressional careers this month – **only 3 of whom are physicians (Rep-elect Bill Cassidy, M.D. of Louisiana, Rep-elect Parker Griffith, M.D. of Alabama, and Rep-elect David Roe, M.D. of Tennessee)**. This will require RADPAC and ACRA members to work together even more diligently to educate these new Members of Congress on the issues that are most important to the specialty of radiology.

With the addition of new Board Members: Jonathan Breslau, M.D. (California), Bill Herrington, M.D. (Georgia), Kevin Smith, M.D. (Minnesota) and Scott Truhlar, M.D. (Iowa), the RADPAC Board will continue to explore new opportunities for ACRA members to reach out to Members of Congress while continuing to expand the very successful congressional site visit program that has resulted in more than 100 facility visits in the past 3 years.

The RADPAC Board has set several ambitious goals for the 2009-2010 election-cycle. One of these goals is 20% RADPAC participation from ACRA members. Since RADPAC's inception there has been a steady increase in member participation. In 2007 and 2008, RADPAC participation from ACRA membership hovered around 10%. One hundred percent of all ACRA members are directly impacted by healthcare legislative initiatives decided by Members of Congress but only 1 out of every 10 ACRA members supports the efforts of RADPAC. I understand that radiologists are faced with myriad requests for society dues and contributions, but it is important for ACRA members to recognize that RADPAC is the only entity that specifically works to advance legislative initiatives important to the radiology profession.

In future messages, I will share with you the strategies the RADPAC Board has designed to achieve our goals and ask for your enthusiastic participation in shaping the political future and preserving the stability of your specialty.