

SDASCOE 2017 Spring Board Legislative Committee Report

With a new Administration in Washington there is much Legislative activity going on. Bill went to WDC on March 14th on his own dime and time for another meeting, but made time to visit our Congressional Leaders up on Capitol Hill. Unfortunately, that was the day the winter storm hit the northeastern states. Just 4 inches of snow really can bring that city to a halt. Congresswoman Kristie Noem was not available as her flights had been cancelled, but Senator Thune & Rounds gave some legislative updates.

Senator Thune was fighting a cold and only had a few minutes to spare as he was chairing one of the Senate Confirmation Hearings. He serves on the Agriculture Committee and will be a key contact as they begin work on the next Farm Bill.

Senator Rounds explained the budgetary process and truly wants Congress to pass a funding bill instead of continuing resolutions. There are 12 Appropriation Funding Measures that need passed to technically fund the government and it is shocking how seldom Congress has passed all 12 in the past 40 years. Rounds certainly knows his figures well and painted a gloomy picture of the large percent of all tax dollars that go to just pay interest on the national debt.

During the first 60 days of a new session, Congress can overturn laws with just a simple majority and currently this is their primary focus. Next will be the budget. Although some talks about the next Farm Bill have started, it is taking a back burner for now. Both Senators were waiting to see what the President's budget would reveal. On Thursday March 16th, President Trump announced his FY2018 budget which decreased funding for USDA by 21%. It is too early to tell if Congress will even adapt the President's budget or how that will specifically affect FSA.

Reminder to send in your NAFEC Associate Membership dues. The National Association of Farmer Elected County Committees (NAFEC) carries a lot of political clout in WDC and are one of NASCOE's greatest allies to promote our jobs and benefits before the next Farm Bill. Please send in your \$20 membership dues and encourage your County Committee Members to join for just \$4 per meeting.

Political Action Committees (PACs) help drive the legislative process and NASCOE has developed a member driven PAC with over 645 of your coworkers contributing an average of \$4.18 per pay period. Our NASCOE PAC is very transparent and full information can be found on the legislative section of the website. With payroll deduction, it is very easy to help. We would encourage everyone to log onto the NASCOE website for great up to date information.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Chase & EJ Goetz - Legislative Co-Chairs