

A View of SNA's Legislative Action Conference in Washington D.C.
By Susan Richardson, Director Nutrition Services, Roseville, Minnesota

I attended the 2008 School Nutrition Association's Legislative Action Conference (LAC) with several other MSNA members, including several Industry members.

On Tuesday, March 4, members visited Capitol Hill. Kathy Burrill had scheduled appointments with our Minnesota Senators and House representatives. Our mission was to advocate for:

1. Giving the Secretary of Agriculture the authority to regulate and enforce nutrient standards for all foods on campus and not just for lunch and breakfast, ending the "time and place" rule.
2. Require a la carte and competitive food sales to be consistent with the Dietary Guidelines as is required for lunch and breakfast.
3. Require national uniformity of nutrient standards from state to state.
4. Request additional reimbursement funding in an amount necessary to provide for the increased costs of improved nutrition. The cost of a Latte is well above \$3.00, yet the Federal reimbursement for a five course free school lunch is only \$2.47.

There were many great presenters who spoke about the presidential campaign, the future of school meals, nutrient standards, and the obesity epidemic in America. Most notable was our banquet speaker, Minnesota's Representative Colin Peterson, District 7. He spoke of the importance of school meals and our role in providing nutritious meals to children. As Chair of the House Agriculture Committee, his support of our program is vital. After his speech, he took the time to meet with the Minnesota Coalition.

In summary, the conference was a moving and educational experience for members as we move toward reauthorization in 2009. Please plan on attending next year's conference. Our presence will need to be strong in 2009!

P.S. If you've not attended before, please know you can participate at a level that makes you comfortable.