



Retrogression Update, November 11, 2008

Now that the election is over, the major issues in Congress are the financial crisis, the energy policy and the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Congress will be returning to Washington the week of November 17 to deal with an economic stimulus package to help shore up our economy.

Steven Nuell, Chairman of AAIHR's Government Relations Committee, Shari Sandifer, AAIHR's retiring President and Karen Fleming, AAIHR's current President will be lobbying heavily in Washington this week in an attempt to have our bill attached to the economic stimulus package.

How is HR 5924 an economic stimulus? U.S. hospitals are expanding services or building replacement hospitals to meet the needs of our aging population. According to the AHA, aside from the jobs associated with the construction of a new wing or a new hospital, for every new bed brought on line in a hospital, three new hospital based jobs are created. This does not even include the creation of new jobs for companies that supply materials or services to new hospitals.

Discussions with Speaker Pelosi's senior staff indicate that they are opening to including our bill on the stimulus package that will be addressed in November's lame duck session. On going discussions with Congressman Wexler's office and our House and Senate champions have made them aware of this opportunity.

If this stimulus package is not passed during lame duck, a second attempt for a stimulus package is targeted for January so lobby efforts will continue into first quarter 2009.

We hope with our new President and a predominately Democratic Congress, critical immigration issues will be addressed within the first quarter of the new Presidency and the 111th Congress.