

ACA Identifies Top Congressional Races That Could Influence Chiropractic Profession

Editorial Staff

On Tuesday, Nov. 2, Americans will not only choose a president, but will also decide the makeup of the entire U.S. House of Representatives and one-third of the U.S. Senate. The results will have a tremendous impact on the chiropractic profession as the American Chiropractic Association continues to build on the legislative momentum that has now made chiropractic care available through the veterans and military health care systems, and established a four-site test of expanded access to chiropractic care for Medicare beneficiaries. As the national voice of the chiropractic profession, the ACA is working to elect a fully pro-chiropractic Congress and to ensure that DCs and their patients know where the presidential candidates stand on chiropractic's priority issues. Moreover, following up on the closest presidential election in history in 2000, in which George W. Bush was elected president after winning the state of Florida by fewer than 600 votes, the ACA has launched a national get out the vote effort, "Back Chiropractic! VOTE 2004," to educate doctors of chiropractic on the importance of getting to the polls this Election Day.

Although the ACA's members and ACA-PAC are involved in supporting and making financial contributions to hundreds of pro-chiropractic candidates for the Senate and House - incumbents and challengers, Republicans and Democrats, in all 50 states - several races are being watched very closely by the ACA's lobbying team. In select races, ACA-PAC is again running informative radio ads detailing the records of pro-chiropractic candidates. In other states and congressional districts across the country, ACA members and chiropractic patients are serving as volunteers in candidate phone banks, neighborhood walks, sign crews and poll watchers.

The following is a short list of candidates whose re-election is deemed a top priority for DCs and their patients.

Sen. Chuck Grassley (R), Iowa's senior senator and chief sponsor of the Medicare Chiropractic Demonstration Project, has used his powerful position as Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee to tell opponents of chiropractic, including Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, MD, to "back off" regarding pro-chiropractic initiatives.

Sen. Tom Daschle (D), the Senate Minority Leader from South Dakota, has been a consistent voice for the chiropractic profession. He led the successful efforts to eliminate Medicare's X-ray requirement and ensure that America's military servicemen and women and veterans have access to the chiropractic care they need and deserve.

Sen. Arlen Specter (R) of Pennsylvania has been a powerful backer of pro-chiropractic legislation as Chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee and a committed advocate for top quality health care for America's veterans. In 2003, Sen. Specter fought for and won passage of a bill to speed the hiring of chiropractors by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Rep. Rob Simmons (R) a pro-chiropractic leader from Connecticut and key member of the Veterans Affairs Committee, who helped pass legislation in 2003 authorizing the federal government to hire doctors of chiropractic to provide care directly to veterans through the VA system. In 2004, Rep.

Simmons followed up by working closely with the ACA and local DCs to ensure that veterans hospitals in his home state were among the first to make chiropractic care available. Rep. Simmons is in one of the most competitive House races anywhere in the U.S., and his victory is essential.

Rep. Johnny Isakson (R), an outstanding representative of Georgia's 6th District, is now seeking the Senate seat being vacated by retiring Sen. Zell Miller (D). Well-known for his support of quality health care for America's military personnel, Rep. Isakson has pledged to continue to work closely with the ACA and his chiropractic friends in Georgia to continue to expand access to chiropractic care in the Department of Defense health system. Rep. Isakson has been a favorite of DCs and their patients across the state of Georgia since his days in the state legislature.

Rep. Bob Filner (D) represents the 51st District of California and has become a fighter for the rights of chiropractic patients, particularly those seeking care at VA health facilities. In March 2004, Rep. Filner introduced an ACA-backed bill designed to provide America's veterans with direct access to a doctor of chiropractic care in the VA system.

Rep. Heather Wilson (R) has been identified as a targeted race in New Mexico, representing Albuquerque and the surrounding suburbs of the 1st District. As a member of the Armed Services Committee, and a veteran of the U.S. Air Force, Rep. Wilson understands the need for chiropractic care for our active duty military personnel, and is committed to expanding the existing military chiropractic care benefit to include dependents, retirees and survivors. In 2004, Rep. Wilson joined as a co-sponsor of HR 3476, the Chiropractic Health Parity for Military Retirees and Dependents Act.

Representative Xavier Becerra (D) represents the 31st District of California and is a rising star on the powerful Ways and Means Committee, with jurisdiction over legislation that directly impacts doctors of chiropractic, including Medicare. Rep. Becerra is a recognized leader on health care issues and, along with the Speaker of the House, Dennis Hastert, was a featured speaker at the ACA's National Chiropractic Leadership Conference.

For additional information on voting pro-chiropractic, visit www.acatoday.com and select the icon for Back Chiropractic! VOTE 2004. The site includes voter registration information and deadlines; polling statistics for presidential, congressional and state elections; resources and links to other sites; and other information to help you make an informed choice on Election Day.

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