



GAC, PAC, and the Legislative Symposium



ASCLS: One Voice, One Vision

- ASCLS has a clear vision for our profession
 - Laboratory tests that are safe, accurate, timely, appropriate and cost effective
 - Competent laboratory professionals
- But just knowing that is not enough
- Our “Voice” is what allows this vision to become a reality



What do we mean by being “The Voice”

- Being the voice can be as simple as:
 - Talking to a friend or family member about what you do
 - Sharing a laboratory-profession related article on social media
 - Giving a career day presentation
- Sometimes being “the voice” is more complicated
 - Especially when it comes to government affairs



Government Affairs?

- Government Affairs deals with an organization's interactions with the legislative branch (Congress) and regulatory agencies
- It seems impossible at first to think a laboratory organization would need to interact with the government, but regardless of whether we are working the bench or a laboratory manager we are affected everyday by laws and regulations made by the government

Government's Impact on Laboratories

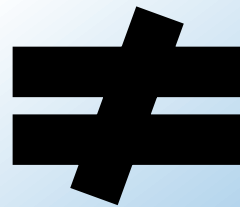


Congress can pass legislation that impacts laboratories



Federal Agencies can publish regulations that impact laboratories

- Laws and regulations affecting the laboratory are supposed to be beneficial to both the laboratory and our patients, but it doesn't always work out that way
 - As laboratory professionals we need to use our “voice” to educate those in government so they can make informed decisions



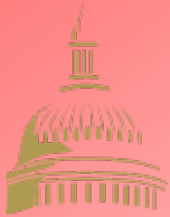
Unfortunately, we “don't speak the same language”, so we need a translator

Lobbyists Are Our Translators

- An activist who works to persuade members of government to enact legislation that would be beneficial to their group is known as a **lobbyist**
- Lobbying involves
 - Raising awareness and persuading legislators
 - Researching and analyzing legislation or regulatory proposals
 - Attending congressional hearings
 - Educating government officials



ASCLS Government Affairs Committee (GAC)



THE
FEDERAL GROUP, INC.



ASCLS works with legislative consultants from The Federal Group in Washington, D.C.

The Federal Group keeps a constant eye on laboratory legislation and lobbies on behalf of ASCLS

On the GAC conference calls, our legislative consultant updates the committee on the current issues on Capitol Hill. The committee is free to ask questions and raise concerns



GAC passes this information on to all ASCLS members through ASCLS Today articles, GAC Newsletters, Action Items, and through committee liaisons to each of the ASCLS Regional President's Councils

Members pass this information on to non-members and their community by word of mouth or social media



So that's GAC, now what
about PAC?



What is a Political Action Committee (PAC)?

- A committee formed by business, labor or other special-interest groups to raise money and make contributions to the campaigns of political candidates whom they support.
- All PACs are legal, ethical, and strictly regulated by federal law.

ASCLS/PAC

- ASCLS has had a PAC since 1976 and is the ONLY Laboratory Professional Society with an active PAC!
- Our PAC offers members a simple way to influence the election process. Donated funds allow members to collectively gain the attention of candidates for national political offices.



Where do ASCLS/PAC donations go?

- PAC Donations are used to:
 - Contribute to members of Congress who understand the importance of OUR profession and are strong proponents of our profession
 - Support the Legislative Symposium
 - Give our legislative consultants a seat at the table (both literally and figuratively)



How ASCLS/PAC works

- There are different types of PACs, but ASCLS/PAC is considered a Separate Segregated Fund (SSF)
- SSF's can ONLY **directly** solicit from members for donations, but are **allowed** to accept **voluntary** donations from **anyone**
 - Wait...What does that mean??

Examples of Direct vs. Indirect Solicitations

- Direct:
 - Your friend on the ASCLS/PAC committee is allowed to ask you **directly** if you (an ASCLS member) want to donate to PAC
- Indirect:
 - Your friend at work is a NOT a member of ASCLS, so you **cannot** ask them directly if they want to donate. However, your friend can still make a donation of their own freewill.

Other things to know about PAC donations

- No money from member dues is given to PAC
- Donations must be voluntary and are not tax deductible
- Contributors will be asked to fill out a form with your name, address and donation amount
 - If you donate >\$200 within one year you must also disclose your employer
- Each individual may donate up to \$5,000 to PAC each calendar year, but any amount helps!

GAC and PAC Together

- GAC and PAC are two huge benefits of membership
- Gaining and retaining members is important because PAC can then solicit donations from a larger pool of people and GAC can have a louder voice.



Legislative Symposium



Legislative Symposium

- Often called “Leg Day” (pronounced ledge-day) by members
- Held every year in March in collaboration with CLMA, ASCP, AGT, and AMT
- Provides members from each state with a platform to take to their Congressional leaders on the same day. This allows one visible and unified voice from the laboratory profession

What to expect at the Legislative Symposium

- Day 1- Host hotel
 - Overview of Congressional Environment
 - Briefings on different legislative issues facing the laboratory
 - Education on how congressional offices work and how to communicate our message effectively
 - Opportunities to network with fellow laboratory professionals
 - Opportunity to visit the PAC table to make a donation
- Day 2- Capitol Hill
 - Travel to Capitol Hill to attend pre-made appointments with the offices of your Senators and Congressperson

Some Tips for a Successful Leg Day

- Start making appointments about a month in advance
- Don't be disappointed if you don't get an appointment to speak directly to the Senator/Congressperson. Staffers are often better to speak with as they are the ones doing all the research on specific issues
- Don't be afraid to ask questions during the symposium. The material can get confusing at times, so if you have questions it's likely others have the same ones.
- Remember, between you and the staffer you speak with, you're the one that knows the laboratory best. Be confident in what you have to say.

I can't attend Leg Day! What can I do to help?

- Remember EVERY VOICE MATTERS. Leg day is a great experience, but if you can't attend, there are many ways you can still use your voice.
 - Call or email your Senators/Congressperson and discuss some of the issues the laboratory is facing
 - Visit your Senators'/Congressperson's local offices
 - Have your own mini Leg Day with members of your state
 - Take advantage of any action items that GAC sends out and share them on social media to help spread the word
 - Donate to PAC

Interested in learning more?

- <http://dc.about.com/od/jobs/a/Lobbying.htm>
- <http://www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous/difference-between-legislation-and-regulation/>
- <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>
- <http://federalgrp.com/>
- [http://uspolitics.about.com/od/finance/a/what is a PAC.htm](http://uspolitics.about.com/od/finance/a/what_is_a_PAC.htm)
- http://www.fec.gov/ans/answers_pac.shtml
- <http://www.ascls.org/advocacy-issues/pac>
- <http://www.ascls.org/education-meetings/legislative-symposium>