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Delivered biweekly to PMA and NTMA members, the Washington Wire e-newsletter provides information on the latest happenings in Washington that are important to the metalworking industry.

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Lobby/Grassroots

Dates Set For NTMA/PMA Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C.

NTMA and PMA are hosting the first annual [Legislative Conference](#) in Washington, D.C. on May 12-13, 2009. The conference will educate members about the priorities of the 111th Congress and the Obama Administration. NTMA and PMA are lining up fantastic speakers consisting of members of Congress and Washington insiders, including keynote speaker Charlie Cook, publisher of the acclaimed The Cook Political Report.

On May 13, NTMA and PMA members will head to Capitol Hill to lobby members of Congress on a variety of issues that impact manufacturing. Teams of members will be escorted around the halls of Congress by team leaders who have experience in congressional meetings.

NTMA and PMA recently joined their advocacy forces to create a larger, more unified voice in Congress. Both associations are being represented by The Franklin Partnership, a Washington-based lobbying firm. The Legislative Conference is the first of many efforts on which NTMA and PMA will collaborate.

Additional details on the conference will be available in the near future.

If you have any questions, please contact [Justin Ketchem](#) at 216-901-8800 ext. 152 or [Sandra Bailey](#) at 301-248-6200 ext. 8010.

Weiss-Aug Exemplifies Why Congressional Plant Tours Are So Important

There are many ways to reach out to Congress. Some are more effective than others. By far, the most effective way to educate a member of Congress about the issues that are burdening your business is to host a plant tour. Last fall, Weiss-Aug Company, Inc., of East Hanover, NJ, did just that by hosting Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ-11) for a tour of its facility. Rep. Frelinghuysen toured the toolrooms, stamping division and molding division, and was very impressed with the cleanliness of the plant and the level of sophistication and automation of many of the processes.

The upper management of Weiss-Aug also had an opportunity to sit down with the Congressman to discuss important issues. They talked about the fact that many people do not realize that manufacturing is full of technology, innovation and stringent standards. They also discussed the loss of a skilled workforce and how difficult it is to attract young people to the industry. The seven-term lawmaker suggested developing relationships with local schools and speaking at career days. They also discussed New Jersey's unfair tax burden and the deteriorating manufacturing base, and how manufacturing companies do not seem to be as important to the state as the service companies. The Congressman agreed with their points.

Weiss-Aug made an impression on Rep. Frelinghuysen and altered his perception of what manufacturing is. In the future, when considering legislation that impacts manufacturers, he likely will think of Weiss-Aug and its technology, innovation, R&D and employees.

It is important not to assume that members of Congress understand manufacturing. There are many new faces in the 111th Congress who need to be educated about the industry. Plant tours are an invaluable part of that education process.

Through PMA and NTMA's One Voice advocacy program, members are encouraged to host congressional plant tours, which PMA and NTMA can help set up. If you are interested in hosting a plant tour, please contact [Justin Ketchem](#) at 216-901-8800 ext.152 or [Jim Grossmann](#) at 314-409-3799.



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Other Issues

Update on the First Week of the 111th Congress

In the opening week of its first session, the 111th Congress immediately began considering legislation that will impact employers of all sizes. As expected, the House of Representatives passed both the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act (H.R. 11) and the Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 12), two bills backed by Big Labor that could have adverse implications if they became law. These bills were assured of passage due to the Democrats' 256-178 vote advantage (one vacancy).

Labor Bills

On Friday, January 9, the House passed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act and the Paycheck Fairness Act. The bills passed by largely party-line votes, with Democrats in support and Republicans opposed and a small handful of Members voting opposite their party's position. Although intended to eliminate sex discrimination in workers' salaries, these bills remove statute of limitations and punitive damage caps on wage discrimination cases, potentially opening the doors for unnecessary litigation and lawsuits against employers even for unintentional salary disparities. These bills, along with the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), also known as the card check bill, are top priorities for Big Labor in the new Congress. The Lilly Ledbetter and Paycheck Fairness Act will now move to the Senate, where there is considerable opposition to both bills. No member of Congress has introduced the card check bill in this new session.

PMA's contacts on Capitol Hill and the incoming Obama Administration indicate Congress may delay consideration of the card check bill; the House may not take it up until February or March. Based on meetings this past week and late December on the Hill and in the Coalition for a Democratic Workplace (CDW) strategy sessions, PMA is hearing that several Democrats are beginning to express reservations about having to vote for the bill again due to the impact on businesses in the current economic environment.

Economic Recovery Bill Tax Relief

President-elect Obama formally presented his outline of an economic recovery package last week. Obama and Speaker Pelosi have imposed a President's Day weekend deadline to complete the measure to stimulate the economy. Although the package is still taking shape, House and Senate leadership has directly expressed to us an openness to include tax relief and credits benefitting small businesses. Of interest to manufacturers, a proposal for bonus depreciation on

equipment purchases is under consideration. Also, President-elect Obama is pushing for a \$3,000 tax credit for employers for every new worker hired. Additionally, PMA is working on a provision letting companies with losses in 2008 and 2009 carry them back for five years to when they were profitable, essentially granting refunds on taxes paid in past years. Extending the Net Operating Loss (NOL) carry-back period could prove helpful to companies supplying the automotive market. There remains some concern about needing to carve out financial institutions that received money under the TARP (the Troubled Asset Relief Program, part of the \$700 billion in assistance for the financial industry) from the NOL provision, however President-elect Obama is supportive. Overall, the economic recovery package being pushed by President-elect Obama could include \$300 billion in tax cuts, making tax cuts about 40 percent of the entire package.

Congressional Committee Assignments

Committee assignments are beginning to take shape in the House. Some notable assignments of interest to companies in the metalworking industry include: Reps. Geoff Davis (R-KY-4) and Peter Roskam (R-IL-6) were appointed to the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, which develops tax, trade and health care policy. Cleveland-area Representative Steve LaTourette (R-OH-14) was appointed to the House Appropriations Committee, which considers federal funding for programs such as job training. Meanwhile in the Senate, the committee assignment process is stalled due to the still unresolved Senate seats in Minnesota and Illinois.

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