

## Advocacy Tools

If you haven't explored the **advocacy** section of the NAGC website, we've posted numerous resources to help you brush up on your advocacy skills or get started from scratch!

The **Legislative Action Network** homepage has links to some important tools; it also has links to the newest materials we've developed for advocates: brochures for school leaders and a myths in gifted education brochure.

## 111th Congress: Funding for Javits Still Not Final – Action Deferred to March

As the 111th Congress wraps up several significant legislative items such as federal income and estate tax rates, unemployment benefits, reforms to the federal Food and Drug Act, repeal of the military's policy related to openly gay men and women, nuclear arms treaties, and judicial nominations, to name just a few, it was unable to come to agreement on how to finalize spending levels for fiscal year 2011. Instead, the Congress punted the final decision on federal agency and program funding to the 112th Congress.

The Congress extended a "continuing resolution," which enables federal agencies and programs to remain in operation until March 4 at fiscal year 2010 funding levels. The 112th Congress will have the final say on how much to allot to each agency for the duration of the fiscal year, which ends on September 30, 2011.

## Looking Ahead to the 112th Congress

Even as we tie up loose ends from the 111th Congress, NAGC is preparing for the next Congress, which convenes on January 3, 2011. The 112th Congress will have more than 100 new Members and as you know, leadership will be divided in Washington between the democrats (White House and Senate) and republicans (House).

So far, the House has named the new Chairmen and Ranking Minority Members of each committee; the Senate will do so in January. Organizational issues, such as naming all the members to each committee and subcommittee, typically take 4 to 6 weeks at the start of each new Congress. We know, though, that most of our work will be focused on the *Education* and *Appropriations* committees. With the switch to republican majority in the House, and a smaller majority for democrats in the Senate, committee membership will be significantly different in the 112th Congress.

As advocates for gifted and talented learners, there will be much to do – educating new Members of Congress to the needs of gifted students; developing support on key committees; cultivating support for legislative proposals, and educating the public through letters to the editor and op-ed pieces, among other important goals. NAGC is revising our messages and is developing new factsheets to support our legislative agenda – using many of the reports on U.S. student performance released in 2010. We'll be looking for examples of quality gifted education services and stories of how gifted education makes a difference for high-ability students.

Congress needs and wants to hear from its constituents – that's YOU – on issues that you care about. NAGC looks forward to working with its members, state associations, and the NAGC

Legislative Action Network to increase support for the needs of gifted and talented students.

We look forward to the work ahead and hope that you do too!

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