

2008 IEEE-USA Congressional Fellowship - Mid Year Report

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My 2008 IEEE-USA Congressional Fellowship year is being spent in the personal office of Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman. With a focus on science and technology policy, my projects have centered on those areas of the Senator's legislative agenda involving defense, homeland security and support for basic science.

To date, I have taken the lead on two major projects. The first was preparation of a Dear Colleague letter in support of National Science Foundation funding. The Dear Colleague letter was initiated by this office as the Majority sponsor. I worked with a consortium of technical societies in getting input for the letter, solicited a Minority co-sponsor to assure bi-partisan support, and finalized the letter well in advance of the deadline. I presented to the consortium for National Science funding (CNSF) on the status of the activity. With much follow-up, a significant number of Senatorial signatures, forty-seven, were collected on the letter.

The second project on which I took the lead was to provide legislative input involving semiconductors, for the FY '09 National Defense Authorization Act S.3001. I submitted legislative language with the support of Legislative Counsel, as well as report language for the bill. The section I prepared addressed the use of verification tools on commercially procured semiconductors by the Department of Defense. This piece of legislation emerged from committee markup and will be part of the bill that goes to the Senate floor. I completed this project at the direction of the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) on which the Senator serves. In the course of preparing this legislation, I held briefings with members of the Dept. of Defense, the National Security Agency, DARPA, IDA and GAO, as well as the Trusted Access Program office (TAPO). In addition, I met with key people at IBM and the Naval Research Laboratory on this topic. I briefed staffers from both the Majority and Minority sides of SASC on key points of the Senate and House versions of the legislation.

I provided support to the Senator's office staff on the Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act S.3036. This legislation came to the floor of the Senate in early June. I was asked to assist during the time it emerged from the Environment and Public Works Committee and came to the Senate floor. My role was to track votes, capture key points in debate and contribute to a floor report.

Other on-going activities include meeting with constituents, tracking NASA funding issues, assisting in the set-up of briefings and providing recommendations on amendments and co-sponsorships. I was invited to make a presentation to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) on Industry-University Partnerships for Research. I also participated on a panel discussion for the Federation of Material Societies on the occasion of Congressional Visits Day.

The first half year of my fellowship has been very instructive and I was especially pleased to be able to contribute in areas of my expertise. I look forward to the second half of my fellowship year where I will focus on preparation of a White Paper on Nanotechnology as well as assisting with a Hearing by the Committee on Homeland Security that the Senator chairs.