

# **FEDERAL REPORT**

## **JULY 2009**

### **APPROPRIATIONS, ENERGY, HEALTH CARE TO DOMINATE SUMMER ATTENTION**

With the Fourth of July behind it, Congress will spend most of the rest of the summer working on the various appropriations bills that fund federal agencies and programs.

The House has already begun working on the major spending bills that will determine funding for many key programs for U-M, including research funding for such agencies as the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy's Office of Science, and others. The Senate appropriators are also beginning to move their various bills through committee.

However, as in the past, there are growing concerns that despite its intention to pass and reconcile all the various spending bills, Congress may be forced into doing one large omnibus appropriations bill before year's end.

Two other major efforts are now working their way through the legislative process. Right before the Independence Day recess, the House narrowly approved legislation that would couple American energy policy with a new "cap and trade" system designed to restrict carbon emissions into the atmosphere to slow global warming. That bill likely faces a more difficult time in the Senate, which has broken energy and global warming into two separate bills. The U-M Washington office is working with other universities to push for more investment in research and development in any such legislation.

The other major issue receiving much attention is health care reform. Discussions and negotiations continue in both House and Senate committees about how best to tackle this complicated issue. What is decided will have major ramifications for all Americans, including U-M employees. The U-M DC office is engaged on this issue as well.

Adding to the media focus in July will be the Supreme Court nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor, whom President Obama chose to replace the retiring Justice David Souter. Her confirmation hearings are scheduled to begin July 13.

### **U-M INTERNS BLANKET D.C.**

Nearly sixty U-M students are working throughout Washington this summer as part of the Public Service Intern Program, which is sponsored by the Career Center.

From congressional offices to advocacy groups, the students are learning about the political and legislative process from the inside. In addition, they hear special speakers and tour various institutions while in town during June and July. The U-M students are part of an army of thousands of college students who come to D.C. each summer for internships.

The U-M Washington office is assisting the group in planning various events. John Lin, student coordinator for the program this year, is also serving as an intern in the U-M DC office.

## **PATENT REFORM BILL STALLED**

Legislation to revamp the nation's patent laws has slowed after being initially approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

The bill would make several key changes to the patent system in an effort to cut down on poor patent quality and reduce litigation costs. However, disputes continue regarding the legislation, in particular concerns about whether the new system would lend itself to repeated challenges of a patent, denying its licensee from using it.

The U-M Washington office has been heavily engaged in working with the key higher education associations to help negotiate a reasonable compromise.

---

U-M Washington Office  
Mike Waring, Executive Director of Federal Relations  
Cindy Bank, Assistant Director  
Sarah Walter, Director of Federal Relations for Research  
Phil Rudd, Office Manager  
202-554-0578