

# **LEGISLATIVE REPORT**

*By: Ron Eller, RSVA Legislative Chair*

## **SPACE FOR PHOTO DESCRIBED BELOW**

The photo above was taken February, 28 2012. In the photograph are Rep. Rob Whitman, Ken Jessup, Ron Eller and Rep. Patrick McHenry.

## **LEGISLATIVE NEWS**

The RSVA Legislative Committee attended the American Council of the Blind annual Legislative Seminar In late February. The topics of discussion were accessible prescription drug labeling, changes in the IRS tax code to encourage people to donate vehicles thru the vehicle donation program, and proposed changes to eliminate the Randolph-Sheppard priority in roadside rest areas on interstate and federal highways.

RSVA was concerned with all these issues; however, our main concern was the Senator Portman Amendment 1742. If passed by the Senate, 1742 would have allowed states to commercialize rest areas and eliminate the Randolph-Sheppard priority to operate vending machines at highway rest stops. We appreciate ACB, especially the Washington office staff, for including President Obama's Memorandum declaring the President's support for the Randolph-Sheppard program. A copy of the memo was handed out to all Congressional and Senate offices by all seminar attendees.

At the time of the publication of this issue of the Vendorscope, I am pleased to say your phone calls, letters, and emails had a lot to do with the defeat of Portman's 1742, an amendment to Senate Bill-1813, the transportation Bill.

However, this battle is not over. The House will soon take up the Transportation Bill and there is a possibility Congressional Representative LaTourette from Ohio might introduce the same Amendment to the House version. I know we can count on everyone to show their opposition in the same manner as the Portman Amendment.

We offer a special thanks to Congressman Rob Whitman of Virginia and Representative Patrick McHenry of North Carolina and all their staff. Both Congressmen are familiar with the R-S program and this was not the first time they have been briefed on issues threatening our priority. I hope in the future Rep. Whitman and Rep. McHenry will work with RSVA and its affiliates in a positive manner to protect the program and move it forward so that we may improve the lives of blind and visually impaired business men and women everywhere.

On a side note, the RSVA Legislative Committee remains committed in providing support to all of the RSVA affiliates and any proposed state legislation that may come forward in order to protect the Randolph-Sheppard Program. It has been noted by NAMA news releases that several states may possibly propose further commercialization projects for roadside rest areas on state highways not protected under the Federal Transportation Act. If you become aware of this happening in your state, please do not hesitate to call any Legislative Committee member or your state affiliate. Contact information may be found at [www.rsva.biz](http://www.rsva.biz).

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