

# ROLL CALL

## Chamber Music

September 26, 2007

*By Kate Ackley and Brandace Simmons,  
Roll Call Staff*

---

With the White House holding a high-profile international meeting on climate change later this week, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce figured it might want to preface the discussions by telling the world what it thinks should be done.

**K Street FILES** "Climate change is happening because of human carbon dioxide. It is real and it is happening," the chamber's Bill Kovacs on Tuesday told a small group of reporters gathered to hear the business group's collective wisdom. "Should we take the risk of more [carbon dioxide] or address the problem by addressing technologies," said Kovacs, who at one point pounded the table with his fist to make it clear his belief that technology — and the money to fund it — was the key to solving global warming.

"I don't know how the Congress of the United States can go on the rampage that they are on about technology without fully funding it," he said.

Kovacs, the chamber's vice president for environment, technology and regulatory affairs, said the chamber was opposed to a cap-and-trade system of global emissions control because it would restrict American's energy consumption.

"It's all going to be expensive," Kovacs continued. But, he said, "our economists tell us if you have the technology it is easier to get very serious reductions in concentrations. If you don't have the technology and you drive it through a very complex financial system ... people are just going to move to other countries."

**Clowns to the Right, Jokers to the Left.** As if they don't get enough pressure from their opponents on the political right, three of the Democratic presidential contenders are getting publicly blasted tonight for their health care proposals from a group that wants them to move even further left.

The California Nurses Association/ National Nurses Organizing Committee has spent \$20,000 to air advertisements during tonight's New Hampshire debate in the Granite State and inside the Beltway. Three ads will criticize the health care plans of White House hopefuls Sens. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.) and Barack Obama (D-Ill.) as well as former Sen. John Edwards (D-N.C.). The ads advocate a Medicare system for all Americans, cutting out private health insurance companies.

"The reason we're doing the ads is that a policy alternative is not being discussed by these candidates," said CNA/NNOC Director of Public Policy Michael Lighty. "Instead their proposals keep the private health insurance companies at the apex of power in the health care system."

The group — which also will lobby this week in favor of H.R. 676, the U.S. National Health

Insurance Act — wants the top three Democratic contenders to scrap their current health care proposals in favor of one that looks more like H.R. 676, which would set up a universal Medicare-type system.

The ads that will run tonight on cable during the debate feature an exasperated woman who complains about high costs for deductibles, drugs and co-payments as well as fighting with insurance companies.

"It's not good enough just to be better than the Republicans on this," the woman says. "Why can't we have single-payer guaranteed health care for every American, Sen. Obama?" she says to a cardboard cutout of Obama. The other two ads feature cutouts of Clinton and Edwards.

Lighty said he knows his group has a tough sell in getting its message to Members and presidential candidates. "We want to really get the private insurers out of the system, but they have a lot of power and money on Capitol Hill."

The group said it has no similar ad campaigns scheduled focusing on Republican candidates.

**A Not-So-Private Fight.** Private equity and hedge fund clients, who until this year cut a sleepy profile in town, continue to sign up lobbying talent, according to public disclosures. The latest beneficiary of the K Street business boom, all spurred by Congressional proposals to revamp the taxes paid by these big-money companies, is McKenna Long & Aldridge.

The firm's Mac Campbell, a former tax counsel to Senate Finance member Blanche Lincoln (D-Ark.), and Joseph Dowley, who previously served as chief counsel of the tax-writing House Ways and Means Committee, have registered to lobby on behalf of the Washington, D.C.-based Carlyle Group.

The lobbyists will focus on tax legislation including bills that would increase the taxes paid on "carried interest," the portion that financial firms and other partnerships pocket after deals earn a profit.

**K Street Moves.** Mehlman Vogel Castagnetti has added a new lobbyist to its health care practice. Colette Desmarais, most recently a top health policy aide to Senate Finance ranking member Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), will join the firm on Oct. 1. While at the committee, Desmarais focused on Medicare issues, including the prescription drug program.

Mehlman Vogel's health clients include Merck, the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, Procter & Gamble and America's Health Insurance Plans. Before her stint with Senate Finance, Desmarais worked for a predecessor to AHIP, the American Association of Health Plans.

"It's really significant," said firm partner Alex Vogel. "She's really widely respected from the substance perspective. This is part of building a strong and diverse health practice." Dean Rosen heads the firm's health practice.

- Curt Stamp, Iowa Utilities Board commissioner, has joined the Independent Telephone and Telecommunications Alliance as executive director effective today. Stamp will direct Washington, D.C., operations and advocacy for the trade association, which represents mid-sized telecom companies. "Curt Stamp will provide outstanding leadership as the newly selected head of our Washington, D.C., trade association," said FairPoint Communications CEO Gene Johnson, who served as co-chairman of the selection process, in a press statement. Stamp was nominated for the Iowa commission by then-Gov. Tom Vilsack, a former Democratic presidential contender.

**Submit K Street Files tips [here](#).**

Copyright 2007 © Roll Call Inc. All rights reserved.