

Illinois ESOP Chapter Members Visit Capitol Hill During ESOP Annual Conference



Illinois ESOP members meet with Congressman Brad Schneider

The Illinois ESOP Chapter had another successful year on the Hill! We were able to confirm meetings with 17 of the 18 Congressional Offices for Illinois.

The majority of the Hill visits were spent shoring up existing support for the old H.R. 1244. Although H.R. 1244 died with the last Congress, we discussed the continued need for support once new legislation is introduced in the House, as well as discussing the pro ESOP legislation that was recently introduced in the Senate. With the freshman congressmen, we emphasized the benefits of employee ownership for both the employee participants and for the State of Illinois.

We were able to meet with Congressman Rush's office for the first time in many years. Although not a co sponsor of H.R. 1244, perhaps with continued effort we can ultimately gain support from Rush on new pro ESOP legislation. We also had a very promising meeting with Congressman Schneider. As a former business owner and consultant, he was particularly interested in the employee ownership model and promised to review the legislation once introduced.

Perhaps our most rewarding meeting was with Congresswoman Robin Kelly. We had an enthusiastic reception and she expressed sincere interest in the ESOP model. She has since followed up with a District Visit to Bimba Manufacturing. Congressman Rodney Davis, of the 13th District, also was very enthusiastic and indicated an interest in a District Visit.

We also met with both Senators Kirk and Durbin at the public breakfast meeting. We then followed up with Senator's Kirk's office for a private meeting.

Finally, a special thanks to all those who spent their time and effort for this cause, and in particular to Regina Carls, JP Morgan Chase, and Rachel Gibson of Burwood Group. It was a detailed undertaking with coordination of many offices, companies and attendees. My sincere appreciation also goes out to Tony Lessmeister of Forsythe Technology, Inc., Art Miller of Holden Industries, Scott Szafasz and Pat Ormsby of Bimba Manufacturing, and Stan Slabas of S&C Electric. Without their contribution of time and effort, we could not have had the necessary positive impact with our Illinois Congressmen. Company participation in the meetings is fundamental to our success and creates strong bi-partisan support of pro ESOP legislation among our congressional offices.

If your company is interested in hosting one of your Congressional Representatives, please feel free to contact me. The Illinois ESOP Chapter website includes tool kits and links to help you plan a visit: <http://www.ilesop.org/index.php?t=govtRelations§ion=root>. Any time is a great time to issue an invitation.

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Illinois Members Meet with Congresswoman Robin Kelly