

LOCAL 3599 WAS IN THE HOUSE FOR THE AFGE 2008 LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

The most important part of the AFGE Legislative Conference is when members fan out across Capitol Hill and meet with Congressional offices to share our issues of concern – like increasing caseloads and decreasing staff. Being the largest Local in the National Council means we have our work cut out for us at the Legislative Conference, because we have a lot of offices to visit.



Once again this year, Local 3599 had three members pounding the pavement in Washington, D.C.- President Sharon Baker, Delegate Rachel Shonfield, and Memphis Steward G. Allen Hammond. Not only was the team raising awareness about national staffing and budget concerns, but we were also sharing specific concerns going on each office. Prior to the conference, stewards were asked to draft a letter to be signed by office members discussing specific office concerns, like the refusal of management in Miami to designate staff members as bilingual. Sharon, Allen, and Rachel delivered your letters in person to Capitol Hill.



The Local 3599 team met with Congressional offices covering the whole Southeast, including: Sen. Shelby (R-AL), Rep. Castor (D-FL)(see photo), Rep. Wasserman Schultz (D-FL), Rep. Lewis (D-GA), Sen. McConnell (R-KY), Rep. Yarmuth (D-KY), Sen. Cochran (R-MS), Rep. Price (D-NC), and Sen. Alexander and Sen. Corker, both Republicans from Tennessee.

The best part about legislative action is that it gives the Union the ability to reach over EEOC management and let Congress know directly what we need. We have already achieved successes this year for our ongoing legislative work. Both the House and the Senate have chided EEOC for allowing hundreds of vacancies rather than staffing up to the ceiling. The Senate is supporting a \$12 million budget increase for the EEOC and the House is even supporting a \$20 million increase. Obviously, the Union would like to see the higher funding level in order to have the resources to hire sufficient staff and start turning around the skyrocketing backlog. There are opportunities for you to get involved without going to Washington. Bring your Congressman to a Union meeting in your office or visit his or her district office. Also, please be prepared to help when we get the word out that we need you to call or email your representative to get their assistance for a special project- As an organized team representing so many states, AFGE Local 3599 can be a formidable player when it comes to legislative action.