

## Capitol Report by Thomas Hagerty, DVM

The Primary elections for legislative and congressional offices are over and we now know who the candidates are for the November general election. All 201 legislative seats and all eight congressional seats are up for election in Minnesota. This is an important time for MVMA members to contact their legislators, get to know them and to extend an invitation to them to seek your advice on matters pertaining to veterinary medicine. There are 22 retirements in the Minnesota house and Senate so there will be at least that many new faces when the legislature convenes January 3, 2017. Your legislative team will be meeting with them soon after the election but it is your responsibility as a constituent to contact your legislator as soon as possible and before the legislature meets in January.

The MVMA's Governmental Affairs Committee (GAC) will meet on Thursday, November 17, 2016 to develop the legislative agenda for the 2017 session. The proposals that the MVMA supported in the 2015 and 2016 sessions were passed into law by the end of those sessions. Several proposals that the MVMA did not support failed in committee and did not reach the floor of either house for a vote. As this is the second year of a biennium any bills that did not pass are now dead and must be reintroduced in the 2017 session if a legislator chooses to do so.

Your MVMA legislative team continue to maintain close contact with the College of Veterinary Medicine, the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, the Board of Veterinary Medicine and the Board of Pharmacy, the Board of Animal Health, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and many Animal Industry organizations including those representing companion animals. It is through these connections that the Governmental Affairs committee develops the proposals for legislative actions that it presents to the MVMA Board for its approval.

We encourage you, as an MVMA member to consider becoming a member of the GAC . Your voice is important and this is one more way of keeping this organization relevant in today's society.

We ask, if you have not already done so, that you make a contribution to the MVMA s VET PAC. This helps to open the doors to your legislators when your legislative team is meeting with them. Most have fund raisers and we are invited and contribute to many of them.

The Fairness to Pet Owners Act is still before the US House and Senate. AVMA is actively opposing its passage. An e-mail or call to your US senator or representative supporting the AVMA position would be much appreciated. As always, please feel free to contact the MVMA office for more information or to answer your legislative questions.