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American Bankers Association
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BANKING'S POLITICAL FITNESS

We're starting an exercise program to build the banking industry's political muscles. During a time in which our industry is being buffeted by economic headwinds -- amid calls to act (and fast!) by policy makers -- it's time to bulk up and stand tall.

Our political fitness program is no fad diet or infomercial quick fix. This is serious business and it requires your steady engagement and involvement.

This is a year like few others when it comes to our industry's national political agenda. Our industry is being challenged by members of Congress and regulators.

We're going to have to play defense -- against possible new regulatory burdens and onerous legislation. We're also going to continue to be on offense in advancing our industry's advocacy goals, including controlling the unchecked growth of bank-like -- but tax free -- credit unions and taking a load off your regulatory burden.

However, it takes a team to win on both sides of the ball -- offense and defense. If you've been on the sidelines, it's time to get involved. And get engaged.

We saw a first-hand example of the very real progress we can make together -- as an industry united -- at our just concluded and inaugural ABA Government Relations Summit. Our all-new Summit was built upon the best elements of our two legacy associations' government affairs conferences.

The Summit -- open to all ABA members -- featured an outstanding lineup of guest speakers, including Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, FDIC Chairman Sheila Bair, House Financial Services Chairman Barney Frank (D-Mass.), and Federal Reserve Board Governor Randall Kroszner, among others.

The 350 bankers who attended also had work to do during our Summit. Joined in many cases by their state association executives (our alliance at work), the bankers went to the Hill to meet with their members of Congress and their staffs. To say these meetings were and are productive is an understatement.

Our participating bankers made a very real difference in our battle to oppose mortgage bankruptcy legislation, to keep the Farm Credit System in check and on the farm, and to level the playing field between banks and tax-advantaged credit unions.

We want to see Summit participation grow every year -- with larger and larger banker delegations coming to Washington and, most important, marching on Capitol Hill. It's

about exercising and further developing your political clout. We will be announcing the date soon for our 2009 Summit and we urge you and your colleagues to participate.

We are going to be doing more to encourage your involvement in advocating what's best for your industry, your customers and your communities. Our successful Government Relations Summit is a first step in what will be a growing initiative as part of a bold, new grassroots advocacy system. As always, we will be partnering with state associations as, together, we build our political muscles.

With the many challenges we're facing this year, and the many changes likely next year with a new Congress and a new administration, it's time to get involved, get engaged and get politically fit.

It takes a team to defend our industry and to actively advocate our interests. It takes grassroots involvement. With your help, we can expand, and build, political relationships with our allies. We want open doors in D.C. to representatives and senators who will actively listen to what we -- an industry united -- have to say.

As we saw at our Government Relations Summit, members of the new ABA are a powerful force, resolved more than ever to press, prod and push for our industry's political priorities. We want to see that momentum continue to grow.

To learn more about becoming a banking industry advocate, visit www.aba.com/grassroots.

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