

PILD Report for ESP

Thanks to the Alpha Eta Chapter of ESP for sending me to PILD as the Ohio representative. I was proud to be part of the Ohio delegation at this thought provoking annual conference. The theme this year was *Public Issues: From County to Congress*. The conference objectives include broadening understanding of public policy issues that impact Extension and our clientele, enhancing public policy education skills, learning how the changing political environment affects support for Extension, building political and public support through consistent and targeted communication with decision-makers, and strengthening existing partnerships and exploring new linkages with local, state, and federal agencies.

A record 39 ESP members made the trip to D.C. this year. Sessions featured the Blue Ribbon Consulting Team that represents Land Grant Universities, a dialogue with National Program Leaders, and sessions ranging from Water Quality and Nutrition Education to Growing the Civic Strength of Communities.

National ESP President, Bob Ohlensehlen, presided over the ESP Association meeting by introducing guest speaker, Travis Jones, Legislative Assistant to Idaho Senator Larry Craig. He gave an insight to the legislative structure in Washington and encouraged members to establish professional relationships with their Congressional staff in D.C. and their home districts.

Funding at all levels remains the main topic of conversation across the nation. Participants gained a better understanding of the current federal situation and were given suggestions for addressing those concerns as we visited political leaders in D.C. and when we returned home. As always, letting legislators know what we are doing and the impacts we are making is critical.

Thank you again to the Ohio chapter for providing support to attend this conference.

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