

## **ATA Tax Policy Committee (Final report of the 2008/09 year)**

The committee and the ATA as a whole continue to struggle to respond in a timely manner to current tax policy issues and to respond to requests for comments on proposed legislation, Treasury Regulations and so on.

At the midyear meeting in Orlando, the committee agreed that the ATA should take advantage of our position as unbiased commentators on tax policy and discussed ways to increase ATA's visibility with Congress, Treasury and the IRS.

In this regard, the committee noted the importance of developing long-term relationships with staff members of those organizations. The committee recommended that the structure of the committee (organized around subcommittees with responsibilities over specific technical tax areas) be supplemented with additional subcommittees focused on maintaining relationships with the IRS, Treasury and Congress. Accordingly the committee has been expanded this year to include subcommittees dealing specifically with those relationships.

In addition, in order to maintain continuity of the relationships, the committee concluded that members of the subcommittees ideally should serve longer terms (preferably 3 years) with 1/3 of the members rotating off each year. While we tried to accomplish this informally with the appointment process this year, it may be necessary to come back to the ATA Officers and Board members and request a formal change in the appointment process at some point.

The committee also suggests that the ATA compile an annual top-10 list of suggested tax changes. The list could include both broad tax policy changes as well as more specific recommendations. In the current year, the tax policy committee will put together the list. In the future, the committee would like to create a survey that could then go out to all ATA members asking members to identify and rank the highest priority issues in our tax system. The committee thought that this might give the ATA significant exposure in the media and provide some good sound bites for tax policy makers.

The committee discussed current "hot" items including energy policy, health care policy, transfer pricing, estate tax, tax-exempt bonds and longer term fundamental tax reform. The committee agreed that our current organizational structure is not conducive to commenting on many of these broad issues and that we should survey our members in order to identify expertise in the specific areas. The committee also plans to survey ATA member (and possibly AAA members) in order to identify ATA and AAA members with personal relationships and contacts with tax policy makers.