

Following is the Legislative Report presented by Lobbyist John Thomas on September 27, 2006 to NFMA attendees at the Annual Convention (*on behalf of Robert McConnell*)

As you know, in the 109th Congress no legislation has been introduced in either the House of Representatives or Senate specifically targeting the flea market industry. Obviously this is a very different situation than the one we found ourselves in previously when numerous bills were introduced including by key legislators on the substantive committees with jurisdiction over the legislation.

It would be nice to be able say that since the NFMA made itself known on Capitol Hill and set out compelling arguments as to why legislation targeting the industry was a bad idea senators and members of congress have simply dropped the idea of anti-flea market legislation. It would be nice but it would also be dangerous. We really do not know why the previous sponsors of such legislation chose not to reintroduce their proposals. But we do know that nothing is stopping them from introducing the same or similar legislation yet this year or next January at the start of the 110th Congress. All we know for certain is that as Congress gets ready to recess at the end of this week there is no legislation directed at flea markets on the agenda.

The only other specific legislation I have heard concerns expressed about has to do with illegal immigration and, as you know, there are numerous proposals on this subject that have been considered in this Session. However, at this time there appears to be no chance that illegal immigration legislation will be considered this week and it is very problematic that the remaining differences on any such legislation will be resolved in a post-election lame duck session. If anything is to be done before the end of this Congress it surely will be in the form of legislation limited to border protection.

Given this situation in Washington the most important current activity for NFMA members in regard to the Congress is to be active in the run-up to November's election. It continues to be important that members of the association involve themselves politically and active in communicating their individual interests to candidates - - educating candidates on the nature and importance of the flea market industry. Each flea market is a business constituent of a Member of Congress and two United States Senators. Each of those representatives to Congress should be known to their NFMA member and each senator or congress member should know the NFMA member in his or her constituency. Political campaigns provide many opportunities for meeting candidates, NFMA members should use those opportunities.