

## **American Legislative Exchange Council – Annual Meeting**

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Late last fall, I was nominated to serve a two year term as the State of Indiana's Private Sector State Chair for the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). My responsibilities primarily center on increasing membership, both in the private sector as well as the public. I work closely with the Public Sector State Chair, Rep. Robert Behning, as well as other IN legislators who are ALEC members. I serve in this capacity on behalf of the American Bail Coalition (ABC).

ALEC held their 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in early August 2002 in Orlando, FL. Also attending the event were Mr. Dennis Bartlett, Executive Director of ABC who chairs ALEC's Criminal Justice Task Force and Mr. Jerry Watson, President of ABC who represents our interests on ALEC's National Private Enterprise Board.

Our participation in ALEC continues to pay enormous dividends in establishing and enlarging mutually beneficial relationships with like-minded private industry members as well as various state legislators. ALEC's membership includes over 2400 state legislators, both Republican and Democratic, who espouse similar beliefs in fiscally sound smaller government and the free enterprise system.

One significant benefit manifested itself in a report presented by Dennis Bartlett before the Criminal Justice Task Force. A few years ago, ABC members and others were the chief catalysts in promulgating model legislation through this committee that became known as CITIZENS RIGHT TO KNOW. Texas passed such legislation in 1995. Recently Travis County, TX (Austin) has been in the crosshairs of a local television station's investigative report into the failure by county authorities to follow this law. The local pre-trial release agency apparently felt they were not responsible for complying with this law's terms and ignored it. The violations were the subject of a four-part expose by the station's news department.

The expose detailing the failures of Travis County, TX pre-trial release was the principal agenda item for the Task Force meeting. Numerous Public Sector Task Force members were energized to investigate if similar transgressions are occurring in their home districts.

ABC members also had the opportunity to meet with various Federal Government employees on our ideas concerning Visa Bond requirements. Private meetings were held with representatives of the Department of Homeland Security, The Justice Department, the national media and state legislators.

Opportunities were had to meet with many gubernatorial candidates (Kansas, Florida, as examples). These meetings allowed ABC members to collectively espouse the advantages of our industry over government funded programs, especially in light of these lean fiscal times.

At this year's ALEC meeting, Jerry Watson, ABC's President, was asked to serve on the Republican National Campaign Finance Committee.

I could fill this entire newsletter with anecdotal evidence of progress being made on behalf of our industry in the majority, if not all, of the states but space precludes it. Suffice it to say we weren't sitting on our hands.

All of these events underscore the importance in being involved in the process of protecting and expanding our industry's footprint. From its inception, our company has consistently chosen to participate in this process at a significant expense. These are dollars we have generated from our involvement in this business and which we feel an obligation to spend. We have consciously chosen to be an active player in our industry, not just a low-cost player attempting to garner a share of the market with no thought to its long term survival. At the end of the day, everyone needs to evaluate whether they are affiliated with a player or a taker.