

# **National Education Association's 87th Representative Assembly**

**Saturday, July 5, 2008**  
**Update From Our Nation's Capitol**  
**By: Fred Young, OMTA Delegate**

The convention hall shook with thousands of voices yelling, "Aye." But moments later, a thunderous "No" shocked me. It was hard to tell if the "AYEs" were more numerous than the "NOs." Dennis Van Roekel, NEA President Elect asked those in favor to stand. From one end of the hall to the other, teachers stood to support their cause. Those opposed followed. The hall was energized.

So what was the issue? There have been so many issues in which the delegates were almost evenly divided. It is happening now, as I am writing. We are discussing incentive pay. A number of states want to receive government money to provide to teachers who deserve it, for acquiring additional education or planning special programs. CTA President David Sanchez, however, reminded us all that "merit pay" is still merit pay, no matter what you call it.

The whoops and hollers are dying down now. The Legislative Amendment condemning incentive pay has passed. This process of discussion and debate will continue until late in the evening tonight and then resume until ALL issues have been resolved Sunday evening. Necks will be sore and butts will be numb. But we all feel that our voice here will positively affect our country in the future. And it's no surprise, because the Representative Assembly is the largest democratically run assembly in the world.