

Rockford Area REALTORS Leadership Team Joined Thousands of Realtors® to Advance Key Housing Issues and Priorities in Nation's Capital

Fighting for all current and prospective American home and property owners, more than 8,500 Realtors® stormed Washington, D.C., this past week to urge action on various real estate issues during the 2015 REALTOR® Legislative Meetings & Trade Expo. The Rockford Area REALTORS Officers and Executive Officer joined fellow Realtors® from every corner of the country to attend the meetings and visit lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

Realtor® attendees, members of the National Association of Realtors®, focused on several major issues pertaining to both residential and commercial real estate during the legislative meetings. Of top importance was opening access to safe and affordable credit for qualified buyers and protecting real estate-related tax policies, both of which are vital to the growth of homeownership and therefore the national economy.

It is crucial that our lawmakers understand the serious issues that face the real estate industry. Realtors® lead the way in advocating for home and property owners in their communities, and we showed this week we can do the same here in our nation's capital with our elected officials. Investing in policies good for homeowners and property owners not only strengthens our communities and helps families build stable futures but also drives a strong economy.

While they were in Washington, they met with U.S. Senator Kirk on Capitol Hill to influence public policy decisions that will directly affect consumers' ability to buy, sell and own real estate. Specifically, they urged Senator Kirk to preserve current real estate-related tax policies and extend the recently expired Mortgage Forgiveness Tax Relief Act, which stops distressed homeowners from receiving excessive income tax bills on forgiven home loan debt.

Other pressing matters included patent reform, the creation of nationwide data security standards, and the passage of the Mortgage Choice Act to end discrimination against affiliated lenders.

Congress is set to take up legislation on several issues in which consumers and Realtors® have a real stake, so it is very important our elected officials know the impact they have on our communities and nation as a whole. Through the strength of the Realtor® Party, they have made known where REALTORS® stand on key issues that affect home buyers, sellers and investors right here in Rockford.

During the week-long conference, Realtors® participated in sessions with a variety of industry experts and government officials who discussed many of the critical housing, mortgage finance and real estate investment issues facing real estate today. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Julián Castro provided a housing industry outlook to meeting attendees and referenced credit availability as the biggest hurdle to homeownership. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director Richard Cordray

discussed changes to loan closing procedures and documents, stating that the new mortgage rules are in place to educate and empower buyers to “know before they owe.”

In addition, Realtors® heard from political strategists Donna Brazile and Ed Gillespie, who shared their perceptions on how social media and the 24-hour news cycle impact congressional priorities and play a role in the political gridlock in Washington. Move, Inc. CEO Ryan O’Hara spoke about the year ahead for realtor.com® and unveiled a visual rebranding of NAR’s official listing site that included a new advertising campaign. Attendees also heard from senior staff from the Federal Aviation Administration Unmanned Aircraft Systems Integration Office about drone technology and from NAR Chief Economist Lawrence Yun, who shared residential and commercial real estate market and economic outlooks.

In addition to the informational legislative sessions, your executive team also had the chance to explore the latest industry innovations and get up-to-date on how new products are transforming the real estate business, as more than 100 exhibitors showcased the newest real estate products and services for the industry during the trade expo.