

DELIVERING THE MESSAGE

NAA MEMBERS HEAD TO CAPITOL HILL TO ADVOCATE FOR
THE APARTMENT INDUSTRY'S TOP POLITICAL ISSUES.

Apartment industry professionals feel the impact year-round of political decisions made on Capitol Hill. As part of the 2010 NAA Capitol Conference, attendees got to have their say, advocating for the apartment industry's most important political issues in front of their congressional representatives.

Over 400 NAA members made a record 209 visits to members of Congress, discussing balanced housing policy, capital markets, renter protections, energy-efficient green buildings, carried interest, the "Card Check" bill and more.

California Makes Personal Connection

The meeting in California Rep. Laura Richardson's office was a gathering of old friends. Before getting down to business, members of the Apartment Association, California Southern Cities (AACSC), discussed memories of home with Richardson, whom the members had known and supported since she ran for elected office as a local city council official.

The delegation discussed the importance of maintaining the government-sponsored enterprises (GSEs) Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac as a source of credit for the multifamily housing industry. "We would hope that Fannie and Freddie open their portfolios to make more loans available," Ron Kingston, President of the California Political Consulting Group, told Richardson.

Richardson, a Democrat, noted that as a moderate she doesn't always vote along party lines. "I've long been a supporter of the apartment association and its issues," she told the delegation. Asked what the members could do to help, she said, "The biggest thing you can help us with is information and keeping us in the loop."

Malcolm Bennett, Owner of International Realty and Investments in Los Angeles, and a past chair of Richardson's financial committee, said the meeting, like past ones, went well. "Laura is such an open person and she always listens," he said.

Nancy Ahlswede, Executive Director of the AACSC, said Richardson is a good example of how contributing to a candidate can have political benefits. "We work very hard to develop that kind of rapport," she said of the group's personal connection to Richardson. "Because we represent 54 cities, it's incumbent on us to have elected officials understand and be aware of our issues."

Florida Advocates Balanced Housing

A delegation from the Florida Apartment Association and Apartment Association of Greater Orlando met with Florida Rep. Suzanne Kosmas, emphasizing how important the region's space program is to the apartment industry as a vital source of local jobs. Kosmas was on their side.

"It's a top priority," she said. "Job creation in the 21st century is going to be in science, technology and mathematics."

Ron Wenzel, NALP, CAM, CAPS, ARM, CPM, Regional Manager for Archon Residential in Orlando, asked Kosmas to consider a more balanced housing policy. "We think there are far too many tax benefits or incentives being offered by the government in order to help reduce the still growing foreclosure inventory of single-family homes," he said. "The 'American Dream' of home-ownership does not apply to everyone, nor is it everyone's dream. Renting is still an excellent option for millions of people and for many reasons, such as flexibility, affordability, quality of service and overall lifestyle."

While Wenzel noted that members of Congress were focused on unemployment and healthcare, he said he appreciated that she understood the apartment industry's issues. "Her responses were very well thought out," he said. And because she has a background in real estate, he added, "She has some first-hand knowledge of what we're dealing with."

James Cornell, CAS, Sales Manager for Invisible Waste Services



Ron Kingston, President, California Political Consulting Group; Nancy Ahlswede, Executive Director, Apartment Association, California Southern Cities; Congresswoman Laura Richardson; Malcolm Bennett, Owner, International Realty & Investments



(From left): Chip Tatum, Director of Government Affairs, Apartment Association of Greater Orlando; James Cornell, CAS, Sales Manager, Invisible Waste Services; Congresswoman Suzanne Kosmas; Marjorie Cook, Executive Vice President, Florida Apartment Association; Ron Wenzel, NALP, CAM, CAPS, ARM, CPM, Regional Manager, Archon Residential

in Orlando, on his first trip to Capitol Hill, noted that meeting with members of Congress was just as important as his own meetings with industry professionals. "As a supplier, relationships are critical," he said. "This is no different."

Alabama Addresses Credit Markets

Alabama Apartment Association members Michelle Childers, Leslie Yeilding, Julie Harbin and Frank Barefield met with Jennifer Pino, a Legislative Assistant for Alabama Rep. Spencer Bachus, and John Cole, a Research Analyst for the House Financial Services Committee minority staff, and discussed several



(From left): Leslie Yeilding, Vice President, General Manager, EBSCO Income Properties; Julie Harbin, Association Executive, Greater Birmingham Apartment Association; Frank Barefield, President, Abbey Residential; Jennifer Pino, Legislative Assistant to Rep. Spencer Bachus; Michelle Childers, Mid-South Regional Director, Apartment Finder; John Cole, Research Analyst for the House Financial Services Committee minority staff

political issues affecting the apartment industry.

Barefield, President, Abbey Residential, Birmingham, Ala., said that repairing capital market conditions was the primary issue he wanted to address. "The market has over \$100 billion in apartment loans coming due in the next two years that need to be addressed," he said. "Fannie and Freddie are basically the only places to go for lending. We'd like you to support Fannie and Freddie being kept as separate entities and not being folded in with other government-sponsored enterprises like the FHA."

Barefield also carried the industry's message on renter protections, green building policy and carried interest, and he spoke succinctly on the "Card Check" bill, saying, "We don't like it."

Bachus was on the apartment industry's side in that regard, said Jennifer Pino, a Legislative Assistant. "Representative Bachus is a co-sponsor of a bill to maintain closed ballots" in unionization, she said.

Barefield said the meeting went as smoothly as expected. "I know what Spencer is supporting," he said. "I wasn't expecting any backlash." Nevertheless, he said he appreciated the opportunity to make his voice heard. "Our representatives in Washington need to know what we in the industry are thinking. I want them to know I make my living from providing apartment homes to our residents in Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina and Texas and I am not a paid lobbyist trying to influence legislation. These issues have a tremendous impact on my business and the homes of thousands of my residents."



(From left): Gary Mitchel, Owner, Thompson Properties, Lubbock, Texas; Trisha Grimstead, NALP, CAM, CAPS, Owner, AG Rentals, Lubbock; Jeff Lowry, CAPS, Senior Vice President, McDougal Companies; Christine Lee, CAM, President, Premier Residential, Kansas City, Mo.; Debbie Haukenberry, Executive Director, Apartment Association of Kansas City.



(From left): Gerry Henigsmen, Association Executive, Apartment Association of Greater Dallas (AAGD); John Cullens, ApartmentCareers.com; Donna Derden, Vice President, AAGD; Rep. Ralph Hall (R-TX, 4th); Gary Mann, Trammell Crow; George Allen, CAE, Executive Vice President, Texas Apartment Association; (seated) Karen Tepera, CAPS, President, AAGD



Apartment Association of Pennsylvania (AAP) members Lisa Delgado, Boyd Wilson, Lancaster, Pa.; Frank Garrett, President and CEO, Boyd Wilson; Christine Young Gertz, Esq., Government Affairs Director, AAP; Paul Cohen, Esq., Partner, Cohen Willwerth, P.C.; Pat Egenrieder, Executive Director, Apartment Association of Central Pennsylvania; and John Hanna, Director of Sales, Property Solutions, Phoenixville, Pa.; stand with Rep. Jim Gerlach (R-PA, 6th) and Rep. Tim Murphy (R-PA, 18th)