

Talking Points & Links: Presentation to New England Realtors Conference (NERC)
Chris Gosselin – February 3rd, 2010. Foxwoods, Conn.

Introduction

New England has incredible political clout for a small region – population-wise New England has only slightly more residents than say Pennsylvania but 6 times as many senators and a number of Congressional leaders that provide an incredible opportunity for New England Realtors whose views are represented by this delegation.

- Senator Leahy is 3rd most senior Senator and Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee
- New Hampshire is quadrennially the center of the political world during the presidential primary and is the only true “swing state” in the region
- Senators Snowe & Collins from Maine represent the 2 most courted Republican votes in the senate by the Democratic majority providing them with incredible bargaining power
- Massachusetts Rep. Barney Frank is the Chair of the House Committee on Financial Services and is now sending Republican Senator Scott Brown to Washington
- Connecticut Senator Christopher Dodd oversaw a large amount of Realtor-backed legislation as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing & Urban Affairs and was the lead sponsor of the Homebuyer Tax Credit extension & expansion along with Senator Joe Lieberman. Representative Joe Courtney led the effort in the House for a sign-on letter that encouraged Congressional leadership to extend & expand the HBTC
- Rhode Island Senator Reed will be the second Democrat on the Senate Banking Committee following Sen. Dodd’s departure

Grassroots Activity

There are a number of ways for Realtors to get involved in politics and speak with their voice on behalf of the real estate industry. The National Association of Realtors derives much of its strength as a advocacy organization from a multi-faceted approach to lobbying with four primary components:

- One of the most important is the **Federal Political Coordinator (FPC)** program, whereby Realtors volunteer to be the primary point-of-contact for their Member of Congress, and are tasked with being the primary means of disseminating Realtor points of view from constituents to Congressional offices.
- One of the easiest ways for Realtors to get involved in politics is by completing **Calls for Action (CFAs)** when asked by NAR or their state association. During the Homebuyer Tax Credit effort over half a million letters to the Hill were sent by Realtors – every Congressional office was familiar with our position on this important issue. Enhance your ability to participate in future efforts by signing up at www.realtoractioncenter.com. For those brokers who wish to help NAR enhance efforts to increase Realtor turnout on CFAs, please consider joining the **Broker Involvement Program** ([BIP Information and Signup](#))

- Another simple way to have an effect on the political process is to get involved in campaigns, particularly through participation in the Realtors Political Action Committee – **RPAC**. Each Realtors’ fair-share goal is only \$15 but the impact that RPAC provides as a group demonstrates Realtors’ investment in advancing our agenda to protect the industry and the American homeowner. RPAC is well-respected as bipartisan in nature, judging candidates based on their demonstrated commitment to Realtor Party issues not based on political party or ideology. ([More information – RPAC](#))
- Realtor staff in Washington & state capitals are an incredible resource for you and work hard to represent your needs on Capitol Hill and around the country. I encourage you to contact me relevant staff if we can be of any assistance on a particular legislative or regulatory issue or can better represent your need in Washington on a particular issue ([NAR Staff Contacts](#))

These four elements combined provide you with a dedicated team of professionals and volunteers to represent you in Washington, DC. As leaders of your state & local associations, I encourage you to contact me if you wish to be more involved in these issues as they develop and I’m happy to point you in the right direction or answer any questions you may have.

Legislative & Regulatory Accomplishments of 2009

Your hard work paid off in 2009 with an incredible amount of activity in Washington DC on Realtor Party issues. While I will list several issues of note below, more information can be found on the NAR website at www.realtor.org/governmentaffairs

- Permanent Ban on Banks Engaging in Real Estate Brokerage ([More](#))
- Extension and Expansion of the Homebuyer Tax Credit ([More](#))
- Protection of the Mortgage Interest Deduction ([More](#))
- Extension of Enhanced GSE & FHA Loan Limits in High-cost Areas ([More](#))
- Sensible Approaches to Energy Efficiency Mandates ([More](#))
- Foreclosure Prevention & Response Program ([More](#))

Outlook in Washington for 2010

- Continue to work with Congress & Relevant Regulatory bodies to improve and streamline appraisal process. (For more information on the HVCC see www.realtor.org/hvcc)
- Introduction of the Home Affordable Foreclosure Alternatives Program will provide additional resources to improve response time from banks regarding short sales. (www.realtor.org/shortsales)
- Changes in FHA will help improve underwriting and will tighten downpayment requirements for less creditworthy borrowers, along with several other changes. (www.realtor.org/fha)

- Financial regulatory reform will be a central topic as we seek to prevent future downturns in the housing market and financial sector
- The future of the Government Sponsored Enterprises (Fannie Mae & Freddie Mac) will be the subject of ongoing study both by NAR and by congressional leadership ([More](#))
- Healthcare Reform is still a political hot-button issue but NAR continues to support sensible approaches that improve affordability & availability in the individual and small business market (www.realtor.org/healthreform)

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