

News Release

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®



REALTOR® ASSOCIATION OF PIONEER VALLEY, INC.

The Western New England Center for Real Estate Services
221 Industry Avenue Springfield, MA 01104
413-785-1328 phone 877-854-6978 toll-free 413-731-7125 fax
www.rapv.com www.pvrealtor.wordpress.com

Ben Scranton, RCE,ePRO, Chief Executive Officer ben@rapv.com

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2015 Realtors® Legislative Meetings & Trade Expo in Washington D.C. Area Realtors® Join Thousands to Advance Key Housing Issues and Priorities in Nation's Capital

(Springfield, MA May 20, 2015) – Fighting for all current and prospective American home and property owners, more than 8,500 Realtors® stormed Washington, D.C., last week to urge action on various real estate issues during the 2015 Realtor® Legislative Meetings & Trade Expo. Leading the area Realtor® delegation were Dawn Henry, President of the Realtor® Association of Pioneer Valley, and Lou Mayo, President-Elect. Realtors® from every corner of the country were there to attend the meetings and visit lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

Realtor® attendees 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 we can do the same here in our nation’s capital with our elected officials,” said Henry. “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”, she added.

While in Washington, areas Realtors® met with Congressman Richard E. Neal (D) 1st Congressional District, Congressman James McGovern, (D) 2nd Congressional District, U.S. Senator staff representing Senators Edward Markey (D) and Elizabeth Warren (D) on Capitol Hill to influence public policy decisions that will directly affect consumers’ ability to

buy, sell and own real estate. Specifically, the Pioneer Valley Realtors® urged their members of Congress 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,” said Henry. “Through the strength of the Realtor® Party, we have made known where we stand on key issues that affect home buyers, sellers and investors right here in the Pioneer Valley”, Mayo added.

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, the Realtors® 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.

The Pioneer Valley Realtor® delegation included: Corinne Fitzgerald of Northfield, Shelley Gutowski of Westfield, Dawn Henry of Palmer, Lou Mayo of Belchertown, Russ Sabadosa of East Longmeadow, Ben Scranton, Brian Sears and Kevin Sears of Springfield, and Edmund G. and Peggy Woods of Holyoke.

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About the REALTOR Association of Pioneer Valley:

Organized in 1915, the REALTOR® Association of Pioneer Valley (RAPV) is a professional trade organization with more than 1,650 members in the Pioneer Valley of western Massachusetts. RAPV is one of 1,300 local chapters of the National Association of REALTORS®. RAPV covers 68 cities and towns in Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden counties. The term, REALTOR®, is a registered trademark for use exclusively by members of the National Association of REALTORS®, whose members subscribe to a strict code of ethics.

Editors and reporters: Please note that the term Realtor® is properly spelled with an initial capital "R", per the Associated Press Stylebook.

Mission:

To champion private property rights and advocate for our members.