

News Release

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®



REALTOR® ASSOCIATION OF PIONEER VALLEY, INC.

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2017 REALTORS® Legislative Meetings & Trade Expo in Washington D.C.

*Area REALTORS® Join Thousands in Nation's Capital
to Advocate for Homeownership*



Massachusetts REALTORS® meet with Congressman Jim McGovern

(Springfield, MA – May 25, 2017) – On behalf of current and future home and property owners throughout the country, more than 9,600 REALTORS® traveled to Washington, D.C., in mid-May to advance key real estate issues during the 2017 REALTOR® Legislative Meetings & Trade Expo.

Members of the REALTOR® Association of Pioneer Valley (RAPV) joined fellow REALTORS® from Massachusetts and across the nation to attend meetings and informational

sessions, as well as meet with regulatory agency staff and lawmakers on Capitol Hill to discuss and advocate real estate issues affecting their businesses, communities and clients.

Attending REALTORS®, members of the National Association of REALTORS®, focused on several significant issues affecting the industry during the legislative-focused meetings, including flood insurance, tax reform and sustainable homeownership.

“REALTORS® are critical advocates for the real estate industry and for their clients, and this meeting is the perfect opportunity to educate ourselves on the issues facing real estate markets, as well as the legislative and regulatory issues on the horizon that could affect REALTORS®, home buyers and sellers, and property owners,” said Rick Sawicki, President of the RAPV.

While in Washington, the Pioneer Valley REALTOR® delegation met with U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren, and Edward Markey, and Congressmen Richard E. Neal and Jim McGovern on Capitol Hill to discuss and influence public policy decisions that directly affect consumers’ ability to own, buy, rent and sell residential and commercial real estate.

“As the leading advocates for real estate, it is important for REALTORS® to meet face to face with our nation’s representatives to make sure homeownership and commercial real estate remains top of mind, since these help to shape our communities and play crucial roles in the economic health of America,” said Edward Alford, President Elect of the RAPV.

When speaking with Senators Warren and Markey and Congressmen Neal and McGovern, one of the main issues discussed was the urgent need to pass a multiyear reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program before it expires on September 30. Additionally, REALTORS® urged the protection of sustainable homeownership by advocating for responsible reform of the secondary mortgage market, prohibiting the use of guarantee fees for any purposes other than credit-risk management, and improving consumer protections for energy-efficiency improvement loans and tax reform.

“With tax reform currently being discussed by the administration and legislators, it is important for regulators to hear from REALTORS® that while tax reform is necessary, it cannot come at the expense of real estate tax provisions, such as the mortgage interest deduction, which are essential to the housing market and a key driver of the economy,” said Rick Sawicki.

During the meetings, the Pioneer Valley REALTORS® and other attendees also heard from industry experts and leaders, including Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Dr. Ben Carson, who spoke about the challenges facing potential homebuyers, including low home inventories and tight mortgage credit. During the meeting, Carson confirmed that HUD is in “lock-step” with REALTORS® about an NAR-backed rule that would make it easier for consumers to buy a condominium with Federal Housing Administration backed financing, which has been

pending since September 2016. Carson agreed that this rule would “make a big difference to a lot of Americans.”

In addition, attendees heard from Fox News’ Chris Wallace and CNBC’s Ron Insana, who shared their insights on the administration’s agenda and other legislative and regulatory happenings in Washington; Mark Calabria, chief economist to Vice President Mike Pence, who said reversing weak productivity and the low labor force participation rate are necessary to boosting the economy; John Worth, senior vice president for Research and Investor Outreach, National Association of Real Estate Investment Trusts, who shared his perspectives on commercial market activity; Roy Wright, deputy associate administrator for Insurance and Mitigation at the Federal Emergency Management Administration, who said that challenges remain in ensuring access to affordable flood insurance and a multi-year reauthorization of the NFIP is critical; and NAR Chief Economist Lawrence Yun, who shared residential and commercial real estate market updates and forecasts for the remainder of 2017.

During the week, REALTORS® also participated in a series of on-site visits with regulatory agency staff at the Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Department of Treasury and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

In addition to the informational legislative sessions and meetings with legislators, the REALTORS® had the opportunity to explore the latest industry innovations and receive up-to-date information on the newest products and services from more than 100 industry-leading companies that participated during the trade expo.

The Pioneer Valley REALTOR® delegation included: Corinne Fitzgerald of Northfield, Dawn Henry of Palmer, Laura Herring of Hampden, Edward Alford of South Hadley, Susan Renfrew of Bernardston, Russ Sabadosa of East Longmeadow, Richard Sawicki of Erving, Ben Scranton, Brian Sears, Kevin Sears and Vincent Walsh 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 1,600 members in the Pioneer Valley of western Massachusetts. RAPV is one of 1,200 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”, or all caps, per the Associated Press Stylebook.

Mission:

To champion private property rights and advocate for our members.