

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

EYE ON THE HILL

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Most Americans consider Labor Day their last chance for enjoying summer activities like family picnics, trips to the beach or visiting a National Park. In the world of Congressional politics, Labor Day is not a picnic or a day at the beach. Labor Day is the beginning of the final push toward victory in primary elections and the start of the general election season.

Why REALTOR® Participation Matters: the “REALTOR® Party”

Real estate and politics share a similar characteristic. Each is fundamentally a local enterprise with a broad national impact. In order to maximize REALTOR® influence in the electoral process, state and local REALTOR® associations and individual REALTORS® need to take action to support our many Congressional friends. Republicans, Democrats and Independents alike are all members of the “REALTOR® Party” because they strongly support our public policy issues. Promoting homeownership, fostering a vibrant commercial real estate sector, the need to expand the availability of health insurance for small businesses and congressional oversight of federal regulatory decisions that affect your business are issues that cut across party lines. A high level of REALTOR® participation is essential to ensure your interests are protected by returning members of the “REALTOR® Party” to Washington, DC.

How REALTORS® Participate

Through NAR, REALTORS® invest more money to support our champions in Congress than any other political action committee in the United States. For candidates who have been especially enthusiastic and energetic champions for REALTOR® legislative issues, the “REALTOR® Party” has a special program, the RPAC Opportunity Race Program. The Opportunity Race Program augments the financial commitment to a member of the “REALTOR® Party” candidate with the power of aggressive grassroots mobilization of local REALTOR® volunteers and it works. In 2004 Senator Johnny Isakson, Republican-Georgia, became the first REALTOR® in history to be elected to the United States Senate. "In my 2004 campaign, the RPAC Opportunity Race Program harnessed the full grassroots power of the REALTORS®. We simply would not have won our election without their support," said Senator Isakson. Representative Dennis Cardoza (D-CA) leader of the moderate “Blue Dog Democrats” echoed

Senator Isakson's gratitude. "The REALTOR's combination of financial support and a sophisticated grassroots campaign helped ensure my first election to Congress."

Measuring Our Success

Come Election Day, our overall success will not only be measured in vote totals or victories, important as they are, but also by the level of engagement among our members. REALTOR® political influence is born in the local and state REALTOR® associations and nurtured here in Washington, DC. Our influence can only be as strong as the relationships with elected officials that have been developed by REALTORS® working through local and state associations. These relationships are the foundation on which we build our political advocacy and representation programs in Washington, DC. Election Day is, in many ways, the fruit of our collective labor. It is our chance to enhance our relationships with existing friends and a chance to build relationships with new allies.

Coming Next Month: Expanding the Scope of REALTOR® Support