

Long-lasting Relationships & Education Assist Industry Efforts

By Dana Lee Cole

RTA members are well aware of the Hardwood Federation's efforts in Washington to enact federal laws, regulations and policies that support the U.S. hardwood industry... and to defend against policies that hurt us.

RTA staff, leadership and members continue to be great supporters of these efforts, certainly, in terms of financial support, but also in terms of the outreach to Congress you engage in to educate policy makers.

The Hardwood Federation Political Action Committee (HFPAC) is one of the most important tools in our efforts to make our voices heard. The HFPAC is financed by personal contributions—not company dollars—from hardwood industry leaders. The Federation uses this money to contribute to the campaign funds of senators and congressmen, on both sides of the aisle, who support the industry. Our goal is to make sure that those who understand our businesses, the impact we have on local communities, and the environmental benefits of our products stay in positions to help, promote and defend us at the federal level.

HFPAC dollars open doors to be sure, but more importantly, they help us establish and maintain long-term relationships with members of Congress and their staff. Washington is a town built on relationships, and the more tools you have to build strong foundations, the more successful you will be.

Although funding in 2020 was lower than in past years, the Federation carefully distributed available funding to bolster the campaign chests of more than 100 candidates. We are pleased to report that the monies were well spent and that most of those campaigns we contributed to were successful.

In the 2019-2020 election cycle, HFPAC supported 12 senators and 96 House members. The Federation doesn't look at party; rather, we take into consideration how well candidates understand the hardwood industry, how they have supported the hardwood industry in their state and in federal policy initiatives, and what House and Senate Committees they sit on...and how those Committees impact hardwood related legislative measures.

Especially of note in the list of supported

members of Congress in the 2019-2020 cycle you will find some very powerful and hardwood industry helpful representatives and senators. We have used the PAC to educate and support them over the years, as they have supported us. Having friends of the industry in high positions goes a long way. A sampling of some of the members of Congress we have supported is below:

Sen. John Boozman (R-AR), chair or ranking member of the Senate Agriculture Committee

- Sen. Shelly Moore Capito (R-WV), potential chair or ranking member of the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee.
- Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV), potential chair or ranking member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
- Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), outgoing chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources (ENR) Committee
- Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), potential chair or ranking member of the Senate Agriculture Committee
- Rep. Jim Clyburn (D-SC, 6), House Majority Whip
- Rep. James Comer (R-KY, 1), incoming ranking member of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee
- Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT, 3), incoming chair of the House Appropriations Committee
- Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR, 4), chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
- Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC, 5), ranking member of the House Education and Labor Committee
- Rep. Sam Graves (R-MO, 6), ranking member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
- Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-MD, 5), House majority leader
- Rep. Frank Lucas (R-OK, 3), ranking member of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee
- Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-MO, 3), ranking member of the House Small

Business Committee

- Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA, 5), incoming ranking member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee
- Rep. Frank Pallone (D-NJ, 6), chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee
- Rep. Steve Scalise (R-LA, 1), House minority whip
- Rep. David Scott (D-GA, 13), incoming chair of the House Agriculture Committee
- Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-VA, 7), chair of the House Agriculture Conservation and Forestry Subcommittee
- Rep. Bennie Thompson (D-MS, 2), chair of the House Homeland Security Committee
- Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-PA, 15), incoming ranking member of the House Agriculture Committee
- Rep. Bruce Westerman (R-AR, 4), incoming ranking member of the House Natural Resources Committee
- Rep. John Yarmuth (D-KY, 3), chair of the House Budget Committee

This is an impressive, robust bipartisan group that certainly wields a good deal of clout on committees of importance to the Hardwood industry.

So, overall, it was a good year for the Hardwood Federation PAC (HFPAC). However, it is important to remember that it is not just about picking winners avoiding losers; rather, it is much more about establishing long-lasting relationships and educating members across the political spectrum.

A big thank you to those of you who have supported the HFPAC over the years. You are vital to our efforts on Capitol Hill. It is very satisfying to see our supported members retain their seats in Congress and remain in our corner. We look forward to working with them—and you—in 2021. ■



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