

PAC PRIMER

Got Questions? Get Answers!

What is a PAC? And how does NV/RPAC help you?



What is a PAC (Political Action Committee)?

Political Action Committees, or PACs, are private groups that are organized to provide funding for political campaigns or the promotion of legislation that would benefit the group's members. Almost every business and special interest group in the United States has a Political Action Committee to make sure its voice is heard by those making decisions that affect their interests. PACs exist across the political spectrum. There are PACs devoted to doctors, teachers, builders, senior citizens, veterans, hospitals, automobile dealers, the arts and more.



Why should Realtors® care?

The purpose of a PAC is to protect your interests. NV/RPAC – the Northern Virginia Realtors® Political Action Committee – exists to protect the interests of the real estate profession; in other words, to protect your livelihood. Just as you purchase insurance to protect your family's health, NV/RPAC is a Realtor's® business insurance.



How does NV/RPAC work?

NV/RPAC collects contributions from NVAR members. These funds are used to support candidates for Congress, the Virginia General Assembly and local offices, including Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, who will uphold the interests of our profession. Also, funds can be used to support or oppose a particular issue, such as to urge the public to support additional transportation funding. Each personal contribution is split among NVAR, Virginia Association of Realtors® and the National Association of Realtors®.



Does NV/RPAC "buy" votes?

NV/RPAC does not buy votes from politicians. If Candidate A (who supports Realtor® issues) and Candidate B (who does not) are running for the same office, who would you want making decisions about legislation that affects you? With NV/RPAC contributions, we work to elect Candidate A. Once these elected officials are in office, Realtors® and lobbyists have opportunities to educate them about issues that are important to us.

We work hard to foster strong relationships and keep the lines of communication open with elected officials for this purpose. We explain to legislators what specific issues mean to the Realtor® community. Elected officials depend on interest groups to educate them on the impact – and unintended consequences – legislation will have on their constituents.



How is NV/RPAC support for candidates and issues determined?

Whether at the federal, state or local level, all funding and issues decisions are made by Realtors®. NV/RPAC funding is approved by an 11-member board of Trustees appointed by the NVAR Chairman of the Board. These Realtors® may identify themselves as Republicans, Democrats or Independents, yet they put affiliations aside to represent the best interests of the membership.

Candidates receive funding based on their support of Realtor® issues only – not on social or political issues. The NV/RPAC Trustees evaluate candidates through questionnaires, interviews, voting records and the committee assignments of elected officials. NVAR works closely with legislators on committees that deal with real estate issues. By conducting this evaluation, NV/RPAC supports those who will be open to our issues, regardless of political party.



Does NV/RPAC support or favor one political party over another?

NV/RPAC is bipartisan. The voters determine the political make-up of our elected officials. Currently, of the 29 State legislators representing the region covered by NVAR's membership, only four are Republicans. Locally, there are two Republican officials in Fairfax County. This is not due to NV/RPAC efforts, but rather the voting choices of the local population. The party make-up changes from time to time based on voter will. NVAR works with all of Northern Virginia's elected officials in order to develop a positive working relationship.



Does NV/RPAC support opposing candidates in an election?

NV/RPAC tries very hard to get its preferred candidates elected and is successful in that effort. Of the 38 candidates endorsed by NV/RPAC in the November 2007 elections, 35 were victorious. But there are times when our endorsed candidates do not win. Over time, NVAR has been able to forge good relationships with legislators whom we did not support initially. However, NV/RPAC will not contribute to winning candidates who are not open to discussion and reasonable about our real estate issues.



How can I find out which candidates and issues NV/RPAC is supporting?

This information is published annually prior to elections in *Update* magazine, in the NVAR News e-mail and on the Government Affairs page of NVAR's Web site, nvar.com. That list is also available at NVAR events such as the Economic Summit and Convention. All VAR members receive a brochure from RPAC of Virginia, VAR's PAC, prior to the November elections with a statewide list of endorsed candidates. All PAC fundraising information is public, and can be accessed at www.vpap.com.



I already contribute to political candidates on my own. Why should I also give money to NV/RPAC?

Some people like to contribute directly to a particular candidate, but they also contribute through NV/RPAC. There really is strength in numbers. The dollars you invest are pooled with literally thousands of other contributors to support candidates who understand issues that affect our business.



Does the process really work?

Absolutely. Realtors® have had a high percentage of legislative successes. We were instrumental in the adoption of legislation resulting in a major overhaul of the Virginia Property Owners Association Act. We have also been successful in securing regulations to protect our industry's professionalism and have defeated many burdensome regulations. Locally, we've developed a good rapport with elected officials. They contact us to discuss problem areas in the community and look to us to help create workable solutions. This is our NV/RPAC voice at work!



How can I learn more?

NVAR's Government Affairs staff members are available to answer questions you may have about NV/RPAC. We are also available to come to your sales meetings to make a presentation on new laws and issues affecting the industry. Call 703.207.3201 or 703.207.3250 for information.



How can I invest in NV/RPAC?

Making an investment in NV/RPAC can be done by mail, telephone, fax or on-line. Call 703.207.3216 to contribute by phone or to have a form mailed or faxed to you.

An Important Lesson

Significant changes have occurred in this industry. Our day-to-day practice is governed by state and local laws and regulations. Our ability to help our clients, our effectiveness as professionals and our impact in our local community are all related to

legislation. The history of our profession is closely linked to effective political action. If we are to survive and grow as a profession, we need to continue our involvement in the political process. NV/RPAC helps us do this effectively.

