

STATE POLITICAL COORDINATOR MANUAL



MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF
REALTORS®

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ABOUT STATE POLITICAL COORDINATORS

State Political Coordinators (SPC) play an important role in the grassroots and advocacy efforts of the Massachusetts Association of REALTORS® (MAR). Each member that serves in this role is tasked with cultivating a relationship and educating their member of the Legislature with respect to the issues important to the real estate industry and homeownership. To that end, each SPC agrees to perform the following duties:

1. **Advocate on Behalf of all REALTORS®:** The REALTOR® Party is the non-partisan approach to supporting legislation and issues that benefit all REALTORS®, homeowners, and private property rights. SPCs must be prepared to remain neutral and remove their personal bias on the issues in order to advocate on behalf of REALTOR® Party-supported issues.
2. **Maintain Contact with the Assigned Legislator:** SPCs are expected to keep in contact with their legislator throughout the year.
3. **Respond to and Promote all MAR Calls for Action:** SPCs are expected to respond to all MAR Calls for Action they receive. SPCs are looked upon as leaders by their REALTOR® colleagues and should lead by example. After responding to a Call for Action, SPCs should encourage their fellow REALTORS® to do the same.
4. **File Field Reports:** Following each interaction with their Legislator, the SPC must file a field report with MAR. Filing a field report after each meeting alerts MAR lobbying, government affairs, and RPAC staff (if a check delivery was part of the interaction) that the meeting occurred.
5. **Utilize and Deliver RPAC contributions:** In coordination with MAR and Mass RPAC, the SPC may be asked to deliver in-district RPAC checks in accordance with Massachusetts state law. In the event that an SPC will deliver an RPAC check to her or her legislator, the state association will notify the respective local association, which may participate in the delivery or presentation.
6. **Attend REALTOR® Day on Beacon Hill.** All SPCs are encouraged to attend REALTOR® Day on Beacon Hill, and to encourage REALTOR® colleagues to do the same.
7. **Participate in training as required.**
8. **Sign and return the SPC Pledge Form.**

What is the goal of the SPC program?

The SPC program serves to link Legislators more directly with REALTOR® members in their community and the issues facing MAR and the real estate industry as a whole. By building a solid and lasting personal relationship with a legislator, the member can establish themselves and the Association as a credible resource on housing-related issues.

What qualifications are needed before I can become an SPC?

Candidates for the SPC position should have a strong interest in politics while maintaining an ongoing knowledge of the issues facing members and property owners in the Commonwealth. Members should also have an existing relationship with their legislator; a history of giving to Mass RPAC as well as direct contributions to their legislator's campaign; responding to calls for action, attendance at Local Association legislative programs, and participation in REALTOR® Day on Beacon Hill. Contact MAR staff or Local Association for additional information about joining the program.

How are SPCs appointed?

Candidates for SPCs must complete an SPC application, which shall be reviewed by the MAR Government Affairs Committee in a time and manner to be determined by the Committee. Members interested in serving as an SPC are encouraged to first contact their Local Association. Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to obtain a recommendation from their Local Association prior to submitting their application to the MAR Government Affairs Committee. Local Associations may submit applications to the MAR Government Affairs Committee on applicants' behalf.

How long will I serve in the position?

How long you serve in the position as SPC will depend on a variety of factors. Each SPC is encouraged to maintain regular contact with their Local Association Government Affairs Committee and staff as well as MAR staff. Because part of the purpose of the SPC Program is to develop lasting relationships with legislators over time, the goal is that each SPC will serve in their position during the tenure of the legislators' term in office. The list of SPCs will be reviewed annually by the MAR Government Affairs Committee.

What the is the relationship among the SPC and the local and state association? It is critical that the state and local associations are kept abreast of the SPC's communications with his or her legislator. This is the key to the success of the SPC program. Specific examples include:

- **Field Reports:** Each SPC is required to file a field report after every interaction with his or her legislator, no matter how insignificant the interaction may seem. MAR will share field reports with the Local Association of which the SPC is a member.
- **RPAC Check Delivery:** In the event that an SPC will deliver an RPAC check to his or her legislator, the Local Association of which the SPC is a member shall be notified.
- **REALTOR® Day on Beacon Hill:** REALTOR® Day on Beacon Hill is successful because of the partnership between the state and local association. Each SPC is responsible for coordinating with its Local Association to arrange for REALTOR® Day on Beacon Hill Meetings. In the event that a Legislator does not have an SPC, it is the responsibility of the Local Association to arrange for REALTOR® Day on Beacon Hill Meetings.

SPC STRATEGIES

As the association that represents REALTORS®, MAR encounters a wide range of legislative and regulatory issues. To address these issues, SPCs are critical in delivering MAR's policy messages. By building solid, long-lasting personal relationships with your Legislator, you can establish yourself as credible, persuasive constituent who believes strongly in MAR's issue priorities. Over time, you will also be considered a valuable resource for information on real estate issues – your Member's "Real Estate Expert."

There are several basic strategies for building rapport with legislators that will help your communications stand out:

- **Get to know the issue** – Truly understanding an issue enables you to communicate an informed and persuasive opinion. You will also be more prepared to answer questions about the issue.
- **Get to know your legislator** – Understanding your legislator's personal interests, committee assignments and voting history help you gauge how best to make "the ask."
- **Get to know their staff** – By learning what each of your Legislator's staff does, you are setting yourself up for success by knowing who to call. By developing a relationship with these people, you will find yourself in a much better position to reach the Legislator if the need arises. They are the eyes and ears for the legislator and should not be ignored.
- **Communicate your personal interest** - Your message as an advocate is strengthened when you describe how an issue affects you personally.
- **Coordinate your activities** - While all communications promoting MAR's priorities are beneficial, coordinated grassroots activities with other MAR advocates help raise the impact of MAR's message on Beacon Hill.

MAR PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY

One of the most important initiatives performed by the Massachusetts Association of REALTORS® is to proactively protect private property rights and the ability of our members to successfully conduct their business. Working in conjunction with the National Association of REALTORS® on federal issues and Local Associations on regional and municipal issues, MAR has a long history of providing legislative and regulatory advocacy on behalf of our members.

As a REALTOR®, you play an important role in this process. Effectively communicating the REALTOR® position on public policy issues to legislators requires active member involvement.

REALTOR® Day on Beacon Hill

Each spring, all members are encouraged to attend this annual gathering of REALTORS® from across the state at the Massachusetts State House. In this collective forum REALTORS®, as a group, voice industry views on legislation and regulations affecting property rights and the practice of real estate. Day on the Hill give you an opportunity to provide briefings on current pertinent legislation to lawmakers and often meet face-to-face with your legislators to relay the association's position.

Private Property Protection Fund

MAR's Private Property Protection Fund (PPPF) helps finance ballot question support, legal advocacy, and public awareness campaigns that the association conducts or supports in order to advocate the REALTOR® position on important public policy matters. Each year a portion of your state REALTOR® dues typically goes directly into the PPPF and REALTOR® offices also may make corporate contributions to the Fund.

REALTORS® Political Action

An integral component to MAR's government affairs efforts is financial support for elected public officials who support public policy favorable to the real estate industry. Through the Massachusetts REALTORS® Political Action Committee (MassRPAC), members may contribute funds to be used in support of statewide candidate elections. Thirty percent of every contribution is sent to the National Association of REALTORS® for use in federal campaigns. Your contribution ultimately plays an essential part in improving MAR's influence in the political arena.

Federal Political Coordinator (FPC) Program

The FPC Program aligns REALTOR® constituents with Congressional Candidates to develop relationships and promote the issues affecting real estate and private property. In addition to being assigned to a member of Congress, FPCs respond to NAR Calls for Action, advocate on behalf of all REALTORS®, and deliver contributions to candidates. Overall, the FPC is the direct link between the associations and the member of Congress.

State Political Coordinator (SPC) Program

Modeled after NAR's Federal Political Coordinator program, the SPC Program gives REALTORS® the opportunity to establish or expand upon an existing relationship with State Senators and Representatives so as to promote, educate, and address the issues affecting the real estate industry and private property rights. The SPC program serves to link Legislators more directly with Realtor® members in their community and the issues facing MAR and the real estate industry as a whole.

DO'S AND DON'TS OF MEETING WITH LEGISLATORS

BEFORE THE MEETING

DO:

- Your homework. Research the Legislator's voting record, issue statements, and issue important to them.
- Get on the Legislator's mailing list to be notified when he/she is in the district, attending meetings, and to learn what statements and positions have been made.
- Prepare. Keep these three meeting goals in mind:
 1. To learn more about your Legislator;
 2. To convey your position on an issue;
 3. To find out how the Legislator feels about the issue.
- Plan your strategy ahead of time and be prepared.
- From the MAR Talking Points, bullet the 3 to 5 most important points, and use real examples. Include questions you would like to ask of the Legislator.
- Be political. Legislators want to represent their constituents (YOU!), so draw a clear connection between what you are requesting and the interests back in the district.
- Be organized and concise. Dress and act like you take the meeting seriously.

DURING THE MEETING

NOTE: You may find that you are meeting with a staff person instead of the Legislator due to the Legislator's hectic schedule. That is just fine. Staff often are the "eyes and ears" for the Legislator and regularly advise the Legislator on how to vote or stand on the issues. They can be a valuable asset in your relationship building efforts with your Legislator.

DO:

- Arrive on time and be polite and friendly.
- Introduce yourself to the receptionist upon your arrival and mention with whom you have an appointment. Be prepared to wait or to be sent to another location.
- Make sure to get the name and business card of any staff person who sits in on the meeting. This will help you follow up after the meeting.
- Be sensitive to the amount of time allotted to you. Ask up front how long is allotted. If you get 15-20 minutes with your Legislator (or staff) that's great!
- Stay on point and discuss REALTOR® issues only.
- Plan on using half of that time to make your point. The Legislator or staff will appreciate your consideration of their time constraints. Do NOT go over time.
- State your issue, use facts and examples, and ask the Legislator if he/she has a position.
- Listen. Don't be discouraged if they refuse to support your position.
- Thank the Legislator for his/her time, offer assistance, distribute any handouts, and leave.
- Leave your business card so the Legislator or staff can contact you if they need to. Be sure to offer your assistance/expertise on real estate issues.

DO'S AND DON'T'S OF MEETING WITH LEGISLATORS (continued)

DURING THE MEETING

DON'T:

- Don't fail to show up for your scheduled meeting. Call if you are running late.
- Don't text or email during your meeting. You are only with the Legislator and/or the staff member for a short period of time. It is important that you remain focused and respectful during the meeting.
- Don't confuse your message by asking for too many things at one time.
- Don't assume that the Legislator or staff knows anything about your issue.
- Don't interrupt when the Legislator or staff is speaking. Let them finish their thought or question before jumping in.
- Don't be afraid to say "I don't know." If you're asked a question to which you do not know the answer, simply say you don't know and let them know that you will find out the answer and get back to them. (Don't forget to get back to them.)
- Don't threaten the Legislator if he or she doesn't agree with your views on the issue.
- Don't underestimate your importance. As a voter, you have power. Your power is your vote and your ability to influence the votes of others in your community.

*REMINDER: The Office of Campaign and Political Finance administers Section 13-17 of M.G.L. Chapter 55, which concerns political activity involving public employees, building, and other resources that are publicly funded. Specifically, **soliciting or receiving campaign contributions by anyone in a building occupied for any state, county, or municipal purpose is prohibited.***

AFTER THE MEETING

DO:

- Immediately send a follow-up email, following up with a handwritten thank you note that includes the points covered during the meeting and send along any additional information or materials you promised.
- FILE A FIELD REPORT.
- Follow through on any promises you made to the Legislator or staff.
- Send the Legislator a note of support when they do or say something in favor of your issue. This is especially important if the Legislator was on your side, and your side was the unfavorable one overall.
- Support the Legislator with personal contributions to their campaign or volunteer to help in their re-election.

DRIVING RESPONSES TO CALLS FOR ACTION

MAR will issue a CFA in response to specific issues that need immediate action from the membership. The goal of a CFA is to generate simultaneous, high volumes of personalized communications from REALTORS® to targeted Legislators.

As an SPC you are the first person who should respond to a CFA. (You must respond to each and every one you receive.) Your response is tracked every time for your state's eligibility to receive the annual President's Cup Award. This award is part of NAR's recognition of states with very effective advocacy programs. After you respond, alert your team as well as other REALTORS® in your office and your board. Ask them to respond as well.

One important thing to remember: DO NOT FORWARD YOUR PERSONALIZED EMAILED CALL FOR ACTION. Your personal information that appears on the screen also gets forwarded allowing others to alter your information.

Through these communications, MAR advocates can achieve a greater presence on Beacon Hill—and better ensure that their messages are heard by lawmakers who influence legislation.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FIELD REPORTING

Reporting the progress you are making toward accomplishing your goal of working with, and developing a strong relationship with your lawmaker is a vital aspect of your role as a grassroots advocate. The information you provide in your reports will help MAR better calibrate the grassroots program with MAR's larger public affairs agenda.

Reporting is one of the best measures of grassroots effectiveness, and is also the best way MAR can track what's working and what needs improvement so that MAR's messages have an impact on lawmakers.

Filing Your Field Report

Field Reports are an important resource to help keep MAR abreast of the activity being conducted statewide on behalf of REALTORS®.

Field reports should be submitted to report interactions with your Legislator. Please use the format included in this packet when filing a field report. They are intended to capture a meeting you have at home or in the field. Do not file a field report when you respond to a Call for Action. CFA information is captured automatically, so no field report is needed.

****If you are filing a field report for a Legislator other than your own assigned Legislator (say you filled in for that SPC at a meeting he or she was unable to attend), you can still file the report.****

Field Report Comments:

Please be sure to include a detailed description of the interaction with the Legislator.

(sample) I attended the USO Pancake Breakfast and Toy Drive for young Marine families at Marine Corp Air Station, Worcester, MA. I was invited by the Legislator to sit at his reserved table. After discussion about other topics happening on Beacon Hill, I was able to bring up the topic of Mortgage Forgiveness Debt Relief and Debt Cancellation. The Legislator was very emphatic that he is interested in making changes to allow taxpayers to apply for the state tax exclusion. He totally understands that the Real Estate Market is very fragile and still recovering.

Who Reads These Reports and Why You Should File Them

These reports often provide valuable information to MAR staff that can't otherwise be obtained. MAR Lobbyists and Policy Staff use this information to revise and craft MAR's message on Beacon Hill. Those reports are the "inside scoop."

THE MASSACHUSETTS PUBLIC POLICY PROCESS

The following was retrieved from the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. To learn more, visit www.malegislature.gov or contact MAR Staff.

Step 1. There Ought to be a Law!

Laws usually originate from proposals sponsored by legislators, the governor or from recommendations of a department or agency but can also emerge from an idea that a member of the public believes should become law.

Step 2. Petition is Filed

Whether proposed by a legislator, offered by the governor or filed by a legislator at the request of a member of the public, a petition for legislation is filed in the House or Senate, accompanied by a bill that is assigned a number and referred to a committee.

Step 3. Hearing is Held and Testimony Heard

The committee holds a public hearing and hears testimony regarding the petition from the public, government officials and office holders. After the hearing is held, the committee issues a report recommending whether the petition ought to pass, ought not to pass, be subject to further study or discharged to another committee.

Step 4. Committee Report Directs the Measure's Path - Rejection or on to First Reading

A bill reported favorably appears in the Journal of the House or Senate and is given its first reading, usually followed by referral to another committee for further review. A measure reported adversely will not proceed further unless the unfavorable report is overturned by a vote of either branch.

Step 5. Bill Read a Second Time, Debate Begins

Upon the second reading of a bill, it is subject to debate, motions and amendments.

Step 6. Bill Proceeds to the Committee on Bills in the Third Reading

Upon a favorable vote at the conclusion of debate, the bill is ordered to a third reading and is then referred to the Committee on Bills in the Third Reading.

Step 7. Bill is Reviewed by the Committee on Bills in the Third Reading

The Committee examines the bill for legality, constitutionality and the duplication or contradiction of existing law. After a thorough review, the bill is released and heads back to the House or Senate floor for a third reading.

Step 8. Bill Read a Third Time, Floor Debate Continues

Upon the third reading of the bill, it is again subject to debate, motions and amendments in the House or Senate. Once debate concludes, a vote is taken on whether to pass the bill to be engrossed.

Step 9. Bill Passed to be Engrossed by One Legislative Branch

Upon a favorable vote by the House or Senate, the bill advances to the other legislative branch.

THE PUBLIC POLICY PROCESS (continued)

Step 10. Second Legislative Branch Considers Bill

If the bill advances through three readings and is engrossed in the second legislative branch, it will be sent to the Legislative Engrossing Division to be typed on special parchment as required by law.

Step 11. Amendments Produce Conflicting Versions

If the bill is amended by the second branch, it will have to be returned to the first branch for a concurrence vote. If concurrence is rejected, a bi-partisan conference committee of three members from each branch is appointed to craft a compromise bill that will be sent to both legislative branches for a final vote. The conference committee's report recommending the compromise bill is not subject to amendment.

Step 12. Bill Enacted and Sent to Governor

A vote to enact by both legislative branches results in passage of the bill, with the newly-created Act sent to the governor. The governor has the authority to: sign the bill into law; allow the unsigned bill to become law; veto the legislation; or send the bill back to the Legislature with recommended amendments. A veto by the governor can be overridden with a two-thirds vote in both legislative branches.

Step 13. The Idea Becomes Law!

The act, which began its journey through the legislative process as an idea, becomes law in Massachusetts if it is signed by the governor, allowed to become law by the governor without his or her signature, or if a veto by the governor is overridden. The new law usually takes effect in 90 days but can become effective immediately if it includes an emergency preamble which must be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the legislature or by an emergency declaration by the governor.

GLOSSARY OF LEGISLATIVE TERMS

Amendment

An amendment is any proposed change to the text of a pending piece of legislation, which will alter the original text by eliminating some of it, inserting new language or both. Each amendment must be voted on and receive a majority of votes before becoming part of the bill.

Appropriation

An appropriation is a provision of law that gives authority to government agencies to allocate and disperse funds from the Treasury for a specific purpose.

Authorization

An authorization allows the expenditure of special or dedicated funds for government departments and programs. The authorization also specifies the terms and conditions under which the funds may be used.

Bicameral

A bicameral legislative body is one composed of two houses or chambers, usually a House of Representatives and a Senate. The Massachusetts Legislature is a bicameral legislative body.

Bill

A bill is the principle mechanism used by legislators to introduce legislative and regulatory proposals for consideration and debate.

Caucus

A caucus is an informal organization of legislators that exists to discuss issues of mutual concern and engage in legislative research and policy planning.

Conference Committee

Is a formal meeting of representatives of the House and the Senate to reconcile differences on provisions of a bill passed by both chambers. Conference Committee members are appointed by the Speaker of the House and the presiding officer of the Senate. A majority of the Committee must reach agreement (often a compromise between the two versions) before it can be considered by either chamber in the form of a “conference report.”

Co-sponsor

A co-sponsor is a Legislator who has joined one or more other Members in his/her chamber (i.e., House or Senate) to sponsor a bill or amendment. The first Member to sign onto a bill is considered to be the sponsor; Members subsequently signing on are considered to be co-sponsors. Any number of Members may co-sponsor a bill in the House or Senate.

Enrolled Bill

An enrolled bill is the final copy of a bill or joint resolution that has passed both chambers in identical form.

GLOSSARY OF LEGISLATIVE TERMS (continued)

Fiscal Year

The fiscal year is the economic—as opposed to calendar year—for purposes of tracking budget and appropriations issues. The Massachusetts' fiscal year begins on July 1st and ends on the June 30th of the next calendar year.

Law

A law is a requirement passed or enacted by a government body, which must be obeyed by everyone over whom that governmental body has authority. A state bill becomes a law after it passes in both houses of the Legislature and is signed by the Governor, passed over the Governor's veto, or allowed to become effective without the Governor's signature.

Majority Leader

The individual legislator elected by his or her party as the chief spokesperson for the party that currently holds a majority of seats in the House of Representatives or the Senate.

Majority Whip

Serving as assistants to the majority leader, majority whips are also elected by the members of their party and are responsible for mobilizing votes within their party on critical issues.

Mark-up

The process by which committees and subcommittees amend and rewrite proposed legislation.

Minority Leader

The individual legislator elected by his or her party as the chief spokesperson for the party currently holding less than half of the seats in the House of Representatives or the Senate.

Minority Whip

Serving as assistants to the minority leader, minority whips are also elected by the members of their party and are responsible for mobilizing party votes on critical issues.

Sponsor

The sponsor of a bill is the legislator who officially introduces the legislation for consideration and debate. All legislation must be sponsored by at least one legislator, but other legislators may add their names to a bill as co-sponsors.

MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® STATE POLITICAL COORDINATOR APPLICATION

NAME: _____
PRIMARY BOARD: _____
FIRM NAME: _____
HOME ADDRESS: _____
PHONE: () _____ EMAIL: _____
NUMBER OF YEARS AS A REALTOR®: _____
NAME OF LEGISLATOR: _____
ARE YOU A CONSTITUENT: YES NO

AN SPC’S MOST VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO MAR IS THE RELATIONSHIP THEY HAVE WITH THEIR LEGISLATOR. PLEASE EXPLAIN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LEGISLATOR:

RELEVANT SERVICE ON ANY REALTOR® COMMITTEES (PAST AND PRESENT):

PLEASE SHARE ANY OTHER INFORMATION, INCLUDING POSITIONS THAT YOU HAVE HELD (APPOINTED OR OTHERWISE), THAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN YOUR APPLICATION:

RECOMMENDATION BY LOCAL ASSOCIATION: NO YES
NAME OF REVIEWING BODY: _____
SIGNATURE OF REVIEWER: _____ DATE: _____
SPC CANDIDATE’S SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____