



2024

SPC

STATE POLITICAL COORDINATOR

PROGRAM HANDBOOK

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Welcome

TO THE SPC PROGRAM

The State Political Coordinator (SPC) program prepares members of the Delaware Association of REALTORS® (DAR) to serve as advocates in the state's Legislative Hall during General Assembly sessions, held January to June 30 each year.

As a SPC, you'll play a key role in DAR advocacy efforts during the session, serving as a face and voice of the state's 4,000-plus REALTORS®. Legislators want to know which issues affect their constituents and will look to SPCs to help deliver the message on issues important to REALTORS®.

Your ability to build close relationships with legislators can prove influential regarding issues related to the protection of the public, the natural environment, private property rights, homeownership, and the real estate industry. Your success and that of our advocacy efforts hinge on those relationships.

This handbook outlines specific SPC responsibilities and provides resources to help you succeed. Those who apply to the program are carefully evaluated by DAR's public policy leadership, and successful candidates are approved by the current DAR President.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to the DAR Director of Government Affairs with questions you may have. Contact information is provided at the back of this handbook.

Thank you for your willingness to share your time and expertise to represent thousands of REALTOS® throughout Delaware!

SPC RESPONSIBILITIES

- Sign the State Political Coordinator Pledge (an Example is on Page 5). This ensures you understand the role of this position. The signed pledge will be kept on file.
- Advocate in support of DAR's public policy positions.
- Educate legislators on issues that impact the real estate industry. Personal and political ideology must be put aside.
- Build, grow, and maintain robust relationships with legislators. Our success depends on how proactive you are in fostering relationships.
- Prepare timely field reports of every contact with your legislator. A field report is required at least three times a year, and additional contact is highly encouraged.
- Respond to Calls for Action (CFAs), and encourage others to respond as well. This is an incredibly important step that will help to ensure that the Realtor voice is heard.
- Attend DAR legislative events and the Annual DAR Legislative Action Day meeting with your legislator. Talking points will be provided prior to the meeting.
- Attend and participate in SPC meetings and complete all required training.
- Develop a contact team. Identify at least three REALTORS® in your legislator's district who can assist in your duties and notify the state Director of Government Affairs upon doing so.
- Maintain regular communication with your team relative to issues and CFAs so they can be prepared to facilitate a meeting in your absence.

THE SPC PLEDGE

SPCs serve as advocates on behalf of all Delaware Realtors, helping legislators understand issues and concerns relative to protecting the public, the natural environment, private property rights, homeownership, and the real estate industry. By fostering a strong relationship and continued communication with their legislator, SPCs ensure the voices of Delaware Realtors are heard and understood. All SPCs must agree to perform the following responsibilities:

- Advocate in support of DAR's public policy positions, setting aside all personal views and opinions to work toward the success of Realtor issues.
- Build, grow, and maintain great relationships with your assigned legislator.
- Contact your assigned legislator and complete a field report at least three times a year, and additional contact is highly encouraged.
- Respond to all Calls for Action and encourage other Realtors to respond.
- Attend DAR legislative events to include leading a meeting with your legislator as part of DAR's Annual Legislative Action Day.
- Participate in and complete all required training.
- Attend SPC meetings.
- Develop a team of at least three other Realtors who are constituents of your legislator.

SPC PLEDGE

“ I hereby certify that I have read and fully understand the responsibilities of a State Political Coordinator (SPC) and pledge that I will perform these duties to the best of my abilities. Further, I understand and acknowledge that if I do not meet the standards of performance in carrying out SPC responsibilities, I will be removed from the position. ”

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Building a great relationship with your assigned legislator is critical to your success and the success of advocacy efforts on behalf of all DAR-member Realtors. Trust is built when good rapport is established, and mutual respect and effective communication are ensured.

Establish and maintain your relationship by always being on time, prepared, and respectful — even if the legislator disagrees on an issue. Keeping these things in mind will cultivate a positive environment and help your relationship continue to grow.

KNOW YOUR LEGISLATOR

The more you know about your legislator, the stronger the bond and the better your chance to advocate for Realtor interests. Research their education, profession, hobbies, and interests. This information gets the conversation started and may even highlight a shared interest.

MEETING GUIDELINES

Meetings with legislators should focus on helping them understand issues that are important to Realtors and on earning their support for legislation.

- Know your legislator's office hours and location, whether at Legislative Hall or in their district.
- Contact the DAR Government Affairs Director to schedule meetings on your behalf with your legislator well in advance and make sure you are familiar with the talking points. Prepare in advance — not on the day of the meeting. *Being well prepared with timely information helps you make a great impression as an advocate for Realtors.*
- **BE ON TIME** for every meeting. A good rule of thumb is to arrive prepared for your meeting 10 – 15 minutes before the scheduled start time.
- Stick to one or two topics per meeting. This will help maintain the focus.
- **KEEP TO YOUR SCHEDULED TIME** (or shorter, if possible). Legislators have a very busy schedule, especially while in session. Make sure you quickly and effectively communicate your point.

- **NEVER EXAGGERATE OR MISREPRESENT INFORMATION!** It's okay to say you don't know — but **it's not okay to exaggerate, misrepresent, and/or make up information!** If you don't know the answer to a question, let the legislator know that you are not sure, but that you will circle back with them when you have the requested information.
- **BE RESPECTFUL AND PROFESSIONAL.** Keep your personal opinions in check. Remember, you are representing the more than 4,500 Realtors throughout Delaware, and they are depending on your professionalism.
- Share personal, real-world anecdotes with your legislator to effectively illustrate an issue. This can be especially effective when expressing urgency and importance. A plus: This helps to build that personal relationship.

HERE IS AN EXAMPLE:

LESS EFFECTIVE

"If the state does not roll back the 1% transfer tax hike, Realtors will incur a huge loss in income."



MORE EFFECTIVE

"I've seen first-hand how transfer taxes make it hard to purchase your first home in our district. And it also makes it hard for sellers who don't have much equity in their homes to be able bring those additional funds to the closing table."

- Thank the legislator for their time when the meeting concludes. If you have a business card with your contact information, feel free to leave one with the legislator.
- If you can't attend a meeting and need to designate another member to attend for you, please alert the state association's GAD as soon as possible, and ensure that the designee is well prepared with talking points.

***** REMEMBER*****

NEVER EXAGGERATE OR MISREPRESENT INFORMATION

KNOW YOUR LEGISLATOR

- Send a thank you letter or note after meeting with your legislator to show your appreciation. Remind them that you will look for their vote(s) on issues of interest to Realtors. (Refer to the next section for tips on writing letters.)
- Keep an eye on how your legislator votes. If they are undecided, give them a call to check on their decision. If their vote is in accordance with your request, make sure to send a thank you note immediately.
- Use social media as an additional vehicle to thank your legislator, including posting pictures you may have taken during meetings or events.
- File a Field Report! This required step is very important. It helps the DAR know what was discussed during the meeting and flags association staff if a follow-up is needed.

CORRESPONDENCE

While SPCs are encouraged to meet with legislators beyond the required three times a year, writing letters or sending a short note is a great way to stay in touch and remind them of Realtor interests. Below are some tips:

- Be polite, courteous, and reasonable. **ALWAYS ASK — DO NOT DEMAND.** A letter's tone and attitude can be misinterpreted; a positive letter will be better received and prompt a positive response in return.
- Letters should be clear, brief, and to the point. Try to keep it to one page.
- Be truthful, factual, and honest.
- If you choose to craft a handwritten letter, ensure the writing is clear and easy to read.
- Keep to one or two topics. When referring to legislation, reference the bill number if possible.
- Be timely. The sooner your letter is received, the greater the chances of influencing the legislator's position.
- A sample letter is included on the next page.

SAMPLE LETTERS

GENERAL ISSUES SAMPLE LETTER

Date

The Honorable (LEGISLATOR NAME)

(OFFICE ADDRESS)

DOVER, DE 19901

RE: (STATE THE TOPIC OR BILL NUMBER, AUTHOR AND SUBJECT IF YOU ARE WRITING ABOUT A PARTICULAR LEGISLATIVE BILL)

Dear (REPRESENTATIVE/SENATOR) (LAST NAME):

My name is (FIRST AND LAST NAME), **and I am a Delaware REALTOR® Political Coordinator who lives in your district.**

(STATE WHY YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE THE BILL OR OTHER ISSUE HERE. CHOOSE ONLY A FEW OF THE STRONGEST POINTS THAT SUPPORT YOUR POSITION. STATE THEM CLEARLY AND CONCISELY.)

(INCLUDE A PERSONAL STORY. TELL THEM WHY THE ISSUE IS PERSONALLY IMPORTANT TO YOU, YOUR FAMILY, YOUR BUSINESS AND YOUR COMMUNITY.)

(FINALLY, AGAIN CLEARLY STATE HOW YOU WANT YOUR REPRESENTATIVE TO VOTE OR ACT ON THE ISSUE AND ASK FOR A RESPONSE.)

Sincerely,

SIGN YOUR NAME

Print your name

Address

THANK YOU SAMPLE LETTER

Your Home Address
City, State, Zip code

Date

The Honorable (LEGISLATOR NAME)

(OFFICE ADDRESS)

Dover, DE 19901

Dear (REPRESENTATIVE/SENATOR LAST NAME):

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to meet with me and other Realtors regarding [STATE ISSUE(s) DISCUSSED; only mention the most important issue(s) here.]

We are grateful to have had the opportunity to sit down with you to bring these issues to your attention.

As you recall, (BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE ISSUE AGAIN IN ONLY ONE OR TWO SENTENCES. IF YOU WERE ASKING FOR A SPECIFIC VOTE ON A BILL, STATE THE BILL TITLE, NUMBER, and AUTHOR AND REMIND THEM OF THE REALTOR POSITION.)

Once again, thank you for your time and attention on this important matter. On behalf of the 4,000-plus Realtors in Delaware, we appreciate your leadership.

I look forward to continuing to work with you on this and many other issues in the future.

Sincerely,

SIGN YOUR NAME

Print Your Name

Home Address

RELATIONSHIP BUILDERS

Do's



- Schedule meetings well in advance. Do your best to work with the legislator's schedule.
- Conduct research on both your legislator and the issues that are the subject of the scheduled meeting.
- Be prepared and knowledgeable.
- Arrive 10 - 15 minutes prior to scheduled meeting time.
- Be polite, respectful, and articulate.
- Put personal opinions aside and listen with an open mind even if you do not agree.
- Be mindful of the allotted meeting time. Stay on track! Get to the point and stay on one or two issues per meeting.
- Send a thank you letter after each meeting and when a legislator votes as requested.
- Check in with your legislator regularly. Keep the window for conversation open at all times — not just when you are asking for their help.
- Build, grow, and maintain positive and personal relationships with your legislator.
- Remember to thank them for their work.

Don'ts



- Schedule meetings at last minute.
- Arrive late and unprepared.
- Act in a way that is rude, aggressive, or disrespectful..
- Manipulate, exaggerate, or make up information.
- Promise what you cannot deliver.
- Be unresponsive or lose contact with your legislator or association staff.



THE FIELD REPORT

Field Reports are a crucial part of the State Political Coordinator program. A report should be completed after every meeting with your assigned legislator. You are also encouraged to complete a Field Report if you write a letter or have a phone call with a legislator, especially if the interests of the DAR are a topic of discussion.

HOW TO COMPLETE A FIELD REPORT

1. Login to **www.delawarerealtor.com**.
2. Click on **Government Affairs** dropdown menu and select the **State Political Coordinator** tab.
3. Scroll down the page and select **SPC Field Report** to fill out the required field report.

Example SPC Field Report

SPC FIELD REPORT

Submitted By: _____

Submission Date: _____

Email Address: _____

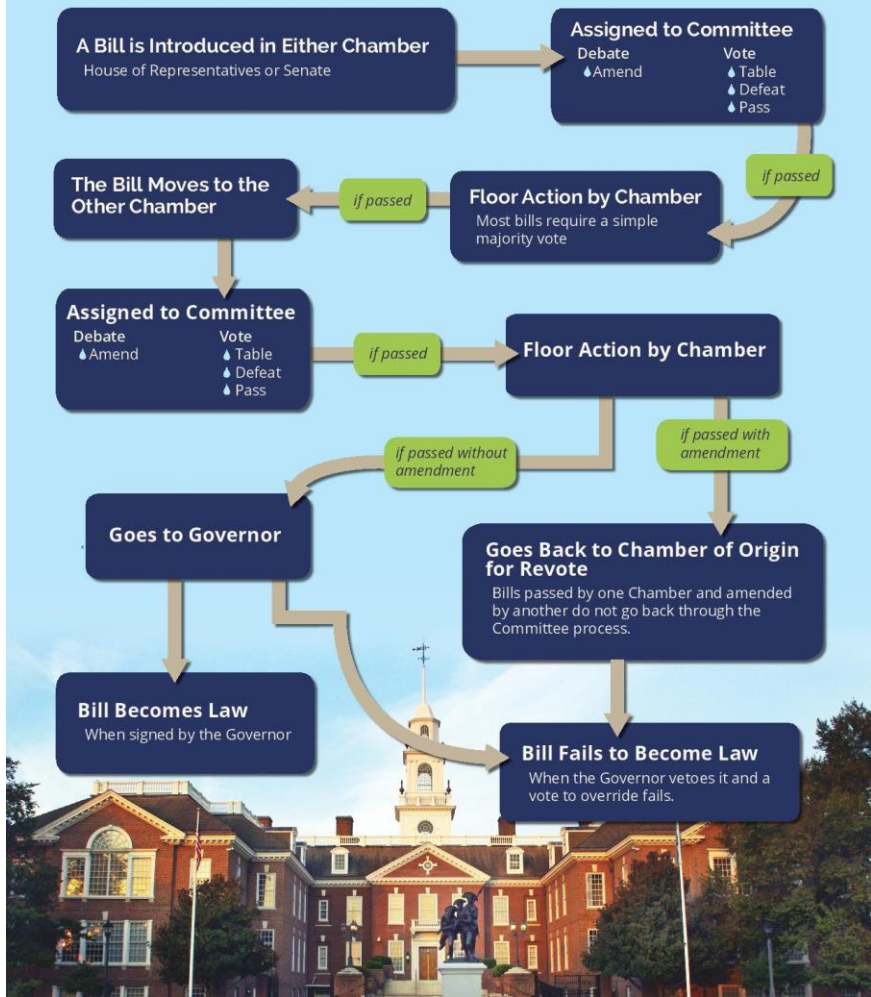
Legislator: _____

Interaction Type (Event, meeting, etc.): _____

Interaction Date: _____

Comments: I attended the USO Pancake Breakfast and Toy Drive for young Marine families at Dover Air Force Base. I was invited by the State Representative to sit at his reserved table. After discussion about other topics of interest in Legislative Hall, I brought up transfer taxes in Delaware. The Representative was very emphatic that he is against making any changes to this important tax source. He totally understands that the Real Estate Market is very fragile. He is the Executor of his recently deceased mother's estate. He understands where the market is. I spent about 45 minutes talking to him, his wife, and their daughter.

HOW A BILL BECOMES LAW



Enjoy being a State Political Coordinator!

This is a very important role — not only for the state association, but also for the National Association of REALTORS®. Your work as an advocate is greatly valued and appreciated. Don't hesitate to contact the DAR GAD with questions or concerns.

Thank you again for your commitment and for volunteering your time as a State Political Coordinator!

CONTACT

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Useful Links

Delaware Association of Realtors

<https://www.delawarerealtor.com/>

Delaware General

Assembly

<http://legis.delaware.gov/>

NAR's REALTOR® Party

<https://realtorparty.realtor>