

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

EYE ON THE HILL

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October 2006

With Election Day less than a month away, the REALTORS® Political Action Committee (RPAC) is expanding the scope of REALTOR® political participation in five important elections. In these five elections RPAC is conducting an “Independent Expenditure” campaign on behalf of candidates who are true “REALTOR® Party Champions” in the United States House of Representatives and United States Senate.

What is an “Independent Expenditure (IE)” Campaign?

The American people expect their political leaders to earn support from voters and financial contributors alike. There is also strong opposition among Americans to tax-payer financed campaigns. In addition to these philosophical barriers, RPAC also has to deal with the limits on direct contributions to candidates put in place by the Federal Election Commission. Fortunately, RPAC can offer supplemental support to REALTOR® Party champions by using a process called “independent expenditures.” “Independent expenditures,” as the name suggests, are expenditures, usually for television, radio and print advertising, made by REALTORS® advocating the election of particular candidate. These communications, in order to comply with FEC regulations, must not be made in cooperation or consultation with or at the request or suggestion of, a candidate, a candidate’s campaign, or a political party.

How does RPAC choose IE recipients?

To be considered for an IE, a candidate must have demonstrated an outstanding record of support for REALTOR® issues. This is a program reserved for our most steadfast supporters who find themselves locked in a competitive campaign. Additionally, potential IE recipients have a high level of support among REALTORS® at the local and state association level. That support is signaled to NAR by the state association requesting an Opportunity Race for the candidate. Once a candidate has been granted Opportunity Race status an additional evaluation process for IE status begins. The RPAC Trustees task NAR staff to research the campaigns in question and present an analysis of the election dynamics. The primary criteria used to evaluate the campaign are: Is the race competitive? Would the application of RPAC resources and REALTOR® involvement significantly affect the outcome of the race? Staff analysis also includes independent polling data to determine if our issues are resonating with voters in the district or

state. These data points are compiled for the RPAC Trustees to use in their decision making process. In addition to these criteria, the RPAC Trustees examine any external political considerations that could have an impact on the race.

Who is RPAC Supporting with an IE?

In the United States Senate, RPAC is supporting two REALTOR® Party Senators with strong records of support for REALTOR® issues, Senator Jim Talent (R-MO) and Senator Ben Nelson (D-NE). Both Senators have been among the leaders in the fight to prevent banks from entering the real estate brokerage business and leaders in the fight for the Small Business Health Plan. In the House of Representatives, RPAC is conducting three IE campaigns for members of Congress with exceptional records of supporting the REALTOR® party: Kentucky Congresswoman Anne Northrup (R-3rd), Illinois Congresswoman Melissa Bean (D-8th) and New Mexico Congresswoman Heather Wilson (R-1st). Each of these candidates is a true champion of REALTOR® interest on Capitol Hill. By standing with our champions when they need us most, REALTORS® heed the advice of poet William Butler Yeats, "Do not wait to strike till the iron is hot; but make it hot by striking."

Coming Next Month: Election Results and Analysis