



State Political Coordinator (SPC)

Playbook & Field Guide



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Introduction

The purpose of this Playbook & Field Guide is to assist SPC appointees in acclimating them to the role, so they can become more quickly successful and effective. This basic “go-to” reference should serve as both a source for ideas and a list of best practices for the SPC community.

What is a State Political Coordinator (SPC)?

Key Ohio REALTORS® are assigned to maintain relationships with specific members of the Ohio General Assembly to keep them up-to-date on REALTOR® issues. They stay in touch throughout the year in the legislator’s home district as well as at the Statehouse to help reinforce the association’s legislative agenda.



The Issues

What happens at the Statehouse in Columbus has real-world consequences. Grassroots communications help put a human face on the issues that affect our industry and let members of the General Assembly know that the choices they make affect the lives of their constituents. The facts, ideas, and industry information you share with state lawmakers will help them make more informed decisions so they can more effectively legislate on REALTOR® issues in the General Assembly.

The REALTOR® Party

The REALTOR® Party is the non-partisan approach to promoting legislation that is of importance to all REALTORS®. SPCs must be able to remove their personal biases on unrelated issues before advocating on any REALTOR®-supported issue **100% of the time**.

About the SPC Program

The Ohio REALTORS® State Political Coordinators (SPC) program is the middle tier of the Government Affairs effort of the largest professional trade association in the United States. The National Association of REALTORS® represents over 1.2 million members (the Ohio REALTORS® represents more than 33,000 members) involved in all facets of residential and commercial real estate as brokers, managing brokers, property managers, appraisers, and counselors.

Ohio REALTORS® relies on State Political Coordinators to advocate on policy initiatives that will result in a fundamentally sound and dynamic Ohio real estate market and foster vibrant communities in which to live and work.

While a strong lobbying group in Columbus is important, the real power of any industry resides in the activism of its individual members. As a result, with such a large membership, Ohio REALTORS® has the potential to be an extremely powerful force at the Statehouse. However, it takes significant grassroots engagement and momentum to accomplish our legislative and regulatory goals. That's where you come in.

Regardless of the issue facing the real estate profession, there usually is a group or association advocating the opposite position. As an SPC, you are the most effective advocate for our industry at the state level. As an expert on real estate issues, and due to your close personal relationship, your legislator wants to hear from you.

Legislators want to know how a specific issue will affect their districts and they will look to you for answers. It is your voice and your experiences that will help guide their decisions. As SPCs, you are active in every legislative district across Ohio. That is an incredible responsibility with significant power.

Your efforts to educate each Senator and Representative will make the difference. As a result, honing and maintaining your relationships matter. When an important issue facing the real estate industry arises, we want your legislators to pick up the phone and reach out to you first -- their SPC and friend whom they know and trust.

This material provides you with essential resources on the SPC Program. It includes different ways to get involved, as well as important introductory material on the legislative process. Thank you for your service in the program. Your involvement is crucial to the success of our lobbying efforts on behalf of Ohio REALTORS®.

SPC Duties & Expectations

What is Your Job as an SPC?

- Support direct lobbying in Columbus with grassroots REALTOR® involvement
- Provide a critical link to ensure a consistent message to legislators in Columbus and in the district
- Meet with your Legislator at least four times per year
- It's important for lawmakers to hear the local perspective or impact of issues
- Keep in touch with your legislator and involve them in appropriate local association events
- Attend in-district fund raising events when funded by RPAC
- Always advocate for REALTORS® and the REALTOR® Party
- Respond to all "Calls for Action" (CFAs) and Ohio REALTORS® requests to contact with your legislator
- Participate in training as required by Ohio REALTORS®
- Sign the SPC Pledge
- Sign up for REALTOR® Party Mobile Alerts (Text REALTORS to 30644)
- Attend the Annual Ohio REALTORS® Spring Legislative Conference -- Coordinate with your GAD to inform/lead others in meeting with your legislator; Be flexible in connecting with your legislator that day; Attend the Spring Legislative Conference reception and greet your legislator

You Need to Always Stay Informed!

- Read Ohio REALTORS® eConnections and the Buzz for public policy updates
- Gongwer News Service briefs provided by Ohio REALTORS®



- Ohio General Assembly Website | www.legislature.ohio.gov
- Legislator's website and e-mail
- Listserve for SPCs

Questions? Contact your Ohio REALTORS® Public Policy staff

Note: If an SPC does not perform the required duties, he or she can be replaced based upon the SPC replacement protocol.

SPCs are also encouraged to make a voluntary contribution to RPAC, as a tangible, credible sign of their commitment to Ohio REALTORS® & NAR's legislative objectives and their understanding of RPAC's importance in achieving those goals.

How to Respond to a Call for Action (CFA)

As the need arises, Ohio REALTORS® & NAR will launch Calls for Action (referred to as CFAs) -- requests for members to contact their Member of Congress or state legislator about specific issues that are of immediate interest to REALTORS®. Responding immediately to CFAs is critical to communicating a coordinated, powerful grassroots message. As an SPC you are the first person who should respond to a CFA. (You should respond to each and every CFA you receive). Because of the importance of a CFA, Ohio REALTORS® & NAR electronically track SPC responses and periodically provides the Ohio REALTORS® My REALTOR® Party with reports on individual SPC performance. These reports become part of a comprehensive report in assessing the ongoing volunteer effort, and may be reviewed when it is time for the reappointment or replacement of SPCs. When responding to a CFA, please communicate directly with your Member and their staff.

You can do so in a number of ways:

- Writing emails and letters;
- Making a phone call;
- Sending a text message;
- Personal visit.

Through this type of direct, personal interaction, you will continue to build a relationship with your Member of the General Assembly, which will help increase your impact long-term.

How to Foster a Relationship with Your Member of the Legislature

Some REALTORS® participate in an array of activities to maximize their influence in Columbus.

Here are some examples of what you can do:

- Plan and conduct a site or office visit with your legislator in the district.
- Get to know the legislator's key staff members.
- Personally interact with and involve your Legislator in REALTOR® activities including invitations to speak at your annual meeting or attend openings of new offices or ground-breakings, etc.
- Volunteering for a candidate's campaign activities will foster personal connections with that candidate (e.g., volunteering in a phone bank, hosting a fund raising event, or even opening your office for an afternoon or evening to use). It will add credibility to your grassroots messages and help you to build a lasting relationship with your legislator.
- Support REALTOR® "Get Out the Vote" efforts. Encouraging other REALTORS® to vote for candidates who support Ohio REALTORS® and NAR's public policy agenda is an ideal way to ensure the state association's and NAR's messages are acted on in the General Assembly.
- Consider making a personal contribution to your legislator's campaign.

Supporting your lawmaker will have a lasting impact on your state representative or state senator and increases your influence on behalf of Ohio REALTORS®.

SPC Do's & Don't

Tips on Communicating with Your Legislator

DO...

- Do deliver the main message clearly. For example, begin with: "I'm calling you to urge you to vote AGAINST/FOR..." and end with "Thank you for speaking with me and I hope you'll support the REALTOR® position and vote against/for..." You do not want to leave an unclear impression about the REALTOR® position.
- Do feel free to give the elected official an example, but be sure it's related to what the bill or ordinance is about. If you are not sure call Ohio REALTORS®.
- Do mention the specific bill number, and also be sure to also mention what the topic is, what the bill does and specific reasons for our opposition or support. Remember, there are several hundred proposals introduced as bills each session!
- Do ask if a lawmaker has specific concerns or reservations and address those concerns if you can. You can always say: "Let me get your concerns to our lobbyists and they will get back to you." You should do the same if the elected official has a question about the legislation that you cannot answer. Remember, an elected official may not want to commit to you at that moment about how he/she feels about the bill.
- Do contact elected official as soon as you can when needed or requested.
- Do remember that it is very effective when the Ohio REALTORS® position is communicated by you – a resident of the district and as someone with a relationship with the elected official.
- Do listen to the legislator. Often this can be just as important as asking them to listen to us.

DON'T...

- Don't go off track with the REALTOR® Legislative Agenda.
- Don't commit to changing the legislation or changing Ohio REALTORS®' position.
- We speak with ONE united voice. Get the concerns and objections of the elected official to one of the Ohio REALTORS® Governmental Affairs staff. Our positions are carefully developed through a committee process which involves REALTOR® leaders from across the state.
- Don't make promises about rewards for the "right" vote or threats of retribution/punishment for taking an opposing position.
- Don't wait too long in contacting the elected official. Because of the large number of bills being considered, action can occur quickly in committee or on the floor.

About RPAC

What is RPAC? RPAC (REALTORS® Political Action Committee) plays an important role in Ohio REALTORS® & NAR's government affairs efforts by providing the association with the necessary resources to support pro-REALTOR® candidates in their election efforts. As a source for funds and an influence on the candidate's election, RPAC gives REALTORS® a strong voice by helping to elect legislators who understand our interests and concerns. RPAC is the backbone of the REALTOR® Party, supporting candidates and elected officials who are supportive on issues of importance to the association's members..



RPAC Criteria for Candidate Selection

There are hundreds of REALTORS® at all levels of the association who are involved in selecting which candidates receive RPAC support. This broad, grassroots-based decision system is RPAC's greatest strength. With the number of REALTORS® involved, the process ensures that decisions are not made on a partisan basis, but rather focused on the REALTOR® Party issues. Decisions are made solely on the fact that the candidate deserves support because he or she meets criteria. Political party affiliation is not a consideration for RPAC support. RPAC is the most bipartisan PAC in the country. Since our public policy positions of supporting homeownership are broadly popular across the political spectrum, we have many supporters on both sides of the aisle.

Like most PACs, RPAC adheres to the policy of supporting friendly incumbents. The criteria RPAC issues in determining its support include:

- Individual action taken to advance Pro-REALTOR® legislation
- Co-sponsorship of Ohio REALTORS® legislation
- General Assembly leadership position and committee assignments
- General Assembly voting records
- Engagement with Ohio REALTORS® Governmental Affairs Staff
- In-district accessibility
- Race competitiveness

Making an Individual Contribution to RPAC

Support of RPAC is a critical component of supporting your Members of the General Assembly. By contributing to RPAC, you can distinguish yourself as a political leader who is actively involved in politics on behalf of REALTORS®. As the Ohio REALTORS® representative to your Member of the General Assembly, it is important that you personally support the PAC that gives you the resources to do your job effectively.

Important Contact Information

Ohio REALTORS® | 200 East Town Street Columbus, OH 43215 | 614-228-6675

Carrie Arblaster

Assistant Vice President of External Affairs
carrie@ohiorealtors.org | 614-225-6222

Spencer Gross

Director, Local Government Affairs
gross@ohiorealtors.org | 614-565-7830

Stephen Ciacchi

Director, RPAC & My REALTOR® Party
ciacchi@ohiorealtors.org | 614-225-6238

Beth Wanless

Director, Government Affairs
wanless@ohiorealtors.org | 614-225-6228



Resources

Ohio REALTORS®

- Public Policy section at www.ohiorealtors.org
- Ohio legislative news is included in the Ohio REALTORS® eConnections, the Buzz., and in the Ohio REALTORS® magazine.
- Gongwer News Service information provided by Ohio REALTORS®.

Ohio Legislative Service Commission

- **A Guidebook for Ohio Legislators** (<http://www.lsc.ohio.gov/guidebook/>)
 - Enacting Legislation (<http://www.lsc.ohio.gov/guidebook/chapter5.pdf>)
 - Tools For Understanding a Bill (<http://www.lsc.ohio.gov/guidebook/chapter6.pdf>)

Ohio General Assembly – www.legislature.ohio.gov

- Senate and House contact information/committee assignments
- Live video/audio feeds from the Senate and House (committee and floor action) – Ohio Channel
- Text of legislation and amendments
- Session and committee schedules
- Transcripts of floor debates
- Ohio Compiled Statutes

The SPC Pledge Form

Ohio State Political Coordinator Pledge Form

The role of the State Political Coordinator (SPC) is a critical component within Ohio REALTORS® advocacy program. Each SPC serves as an educator to/influencer of their member of the Ohio General Assembly with respect to the issues important to the real estate industry and protecting private property rights. To that end, each SPC should agree to perform the following duties:

1. Respond to all Ohio REALTORS® Call for Actions
2. Advocate on behalf of all REALTORS® within the district and within Ohio
3. Contact the Ohio legislator at least once per quarter and submit a field report each time
4. Participate in training as required
5. To the extent possible, attend any local RPAC supported event
6. Attend the Ohio REALTORS® Spring Legislative Conference and Statehouse Reception
7. Suggested investment in Ohio REALTORS® RPAC at the \$200 level
8. Sign and return this pledge form

By my signature below, I hereby certify that I have read each of the SPC duties carefully and pledge to perform them to the best of my abilities throughout my term (which coincides with the term of the legislator). Further, I acknowledge that if I do not meet the standards of performance, I will be removed from the position.

Name of Legislator: _____

SPC Name: _____

Date: _____

SPC Signature: _____

As referenced in the SPC Pledge Form and the SPC responsibilities you have agreed to fulfill all the duties as prescribed in the SPC job description. If you do not, you may be replaced. The Ohio REALTORS® Executive Committee has developed a protocol for replacement of any SPC that fails the expectations set forth in the SPC job description.

OHIO RPAC PAYMENT INFORMATION

___ CHECK, payable to Ohio RPAC in the amount of \$ _____

___ Visa ___ MasterCard ___ AMEX ___ Discover

Card #: _____ EXP. Date: _____ / _____

Signature of Cardholder (required): _____