

SIIA's "Fly-In" Participants Find Positive Attitudes among Congress



Todd Archer, Congressman Tom Cole (R-OK), Tom Belding, and Barry Koonce

SIIA members made their case for federal government support of a broad spectrum of self-insurance during the 2018 Washington, DC "Fly-In" that matched up key industry figures with the offices of Congressional leaders of both the House and Senate.

"In our Democracy, it remains vitally important to remind elected leaders who we are and what we stand for and to do that we have to put in the work," said Barry Koonce, Vice President and

Chief Government Affairs Officer of American Fidelity Assurance Company in Oklahoma City OK, which writes stop-loss insurance throughout the U.S.

"This was a really useful example of being able to get in front of elected officials, particularly as we hope the Senate will pass the Self-Insurance Protection Act (SIPA) which earlier was approved by the House on a bipartisan landslide vote of 400-14," Koonce said.



Harry Tipper, Gerald Gates, Brady Bizarro, Adam Russo, and Ron Peck

Koonce noted that his group of “Fly-In” participants was greeted with positive attitudes in the Senate offices they were scheduled to visit. “I hope we were successful in convincing additional senators to join as co-sponsors of the SIPA bill when it is scheduled for consideration,” he said.

Koonce noted that SIIA is the clear leader among industry support organizations in advocating for self-insurance at the federal level. “SIIA’s staff did a good job of organizing our group and rolling us out to hit the Hill. I saw nothing but positive attitudes about SIPA and association health plans during our meetings,” he said.

Debra Gaglioti, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Captive Planning Associates of Marlton NJ was participating

meetings gave us the opportunity to further the education process, to help them understand how important self-insurance is to employers and how government action – or inaction – could be damaging to the lives of many thousands of people.

“In discussing SIPA, particularly on the Senate side, we wanted to make sure they understand how self-insurance and stop-loss mechanisms work,” Suter said. “Our visits provided the opportunity for them to hear what is at stake for many of their constituent employers and a vast number of employees and dependents.”

in her first SIIA advocacy meetings with members of Congress. “As a member of the SIIA Health Care Committee I focused on advocating for SIPA while our president and CEO John Capasso briefed Congressional offices about the effects of new regulatory filing requirements that the IRS imposed on captive insurance companies,” she said.

Gaglioti was gratified that Congressional staff her group visited reflected generally high levels of interest in self-insurance issues to the point of taking detailed notes. “We left the meetings with the impression that self-insurance has registered as an important issue,” she said.

“We’re naturally concerned about our industry’s success in influencing government in order to help companies provide the best possible employee health care at affordable rates,” Gaglioti said. “We are encouraged by SIIA’s proactive approach to federal and state legislative issues affecting our industry.

“It’s well worth our time to experience our government’s process that affect all our success in serving our clients,” Gaglioti added.

Steve Suter, president and CEO of Healthcare Management Administrators, Inc., a TPA located in Seattle WA, said, “There is still a gap of self-insurance knowledge at the Congressional level. Each of our



Steve Suter



SIIA members preparing for their Hill meetings

Suter noted the efficiency of combining the “Fly-In” with a Government Relations Committee meeting the day before Congressional visits to review legislative targets and strategies for the coming year:

“We were well equipped with information to support our case for SIPA among Congressional offices where we sought support,” he said. *“I was encouraged by the tone of the conversations and general acceptance of a continuing dialogue.”*

SIIA’s ongoing federal government relations efforts will continue through this session of Congress. Additional in-person advocacy or grassroots activity in representatives’ home district offices are encouraged by SIIA members. Support for those efforts remains available from SIIA vice president of government relations Ryan Work at rwork@siia.org. ■



SIIA members Steve Suter and Catherine Bresler meet with Elvia Montoya of Oregon's Senator Merkley office for SIIA's Fly-In.

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