

Headlines from the Hill

Brief overview of ANA political action committee

By Rachel Conant and Carlos Jackson

Why political advocacy?

The American Nurses Association's (ANA's) ability to advance our legislative agenda at the Federal level depends on the successful coordination and implementation of three critical components of our Federal legislative program: lobbying, grassroots advocacy, and political advocacy.

Political advocacy—supporting candidates who are supportive of nursing—is a key means of advocating for and advancing nursing issues. Over the years, ANA's political program has played a key role in successes such as the enactment of the Needlestick Protection Act and Nurse Reinvestment Act.

The ANA political action committee (PAC) works to advance ANA's legislative agenda by helping ANA maintain a political presence in Washington, and more fundamentally, by identifying and promoting the election of pro-nursing candidates. Political advocacy is not about political parties or personal agendas. It is about locating and supporting candidates who are concerned about the challenges facing nursing and our healthcare system, and who have demonstrated a commitment to improving health care and addressing the issues of concern to ANA and its members.

While ANA understands and respects that our members, and nurses generally, have many other issues on which they may base their support for a candidate, ANA-PAC considers candidates based only on their political viability and their support for and record on nursing and related healthcare issues—the issues on which we work and hold expertise. ANA's candidate support has nothing to do with a candidate's party affiliation or their position issues outside of nursing and health care, such as choice, judicial nominations, the environment, etc. ANA's membership holds diverse views on issues outside of the nursing spectrum, and ANA does not presume to make decisions or represent anyone on these non-nursing issues.

In addition to endorsements, ANA-PAC makes minimal financial contributions to non-endorsed candidates

based on a PAC Board-approved ceiling in order to fund attendance of political events in the candidate's home state or in Washington, D.C. These contributions, which are not construed as endorsement, allow Constituent Member Association (CMA) members and ANA Government Affairs staff access to candidates and their staff, provide additional opportunities for outreach and education, and enhance ANA's political presence.

ANA-PAC is key to ANA's legislative success in the U.S. Congress. The PAC not only raises money to contribute to candidates running for political office, but also increases member participation, empowers its members to play a greater role in the development of public policy, and better positions the profession in the legislative arena.

Relationship between ANA and ANA-PAC

The ANA-PAC is an unincorporated committee of the ANA Board of Directors. It holds a segregated financial fund used for the purpose of supporting candidates for Federal office. In 1989, the ANA Board of Directors for-

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malized the relationship between ANA and ANA-PAC. It was the consensus of the ANA Board of Directors that ANA-PAC would be placed on ANA's organizational chart with a direct solid line to the ANA Board of Directors. The 1990 ANA House of Delegates later ratified this decision. The ANA House of Delegates also determined that ANA-PAC is a committee of the ANA Board of Directors. Furthermore, it was determined that:

- political action is a core mission activity of ANA.
- funding for administrative support for ANA-PAC, including costs of fundraising, would be incurred by ANA.

Under Federal election law, the parent organization (in this case, ANA) provides administrative services, including fundraising costs, directly from general revenue.

For more information on ANA-PAC, please contact ANA Government Affairs at gova@ana.org. ★

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