

IIABW Lobbies Congress

A team of IIABW members lobbied our Congressional delegation in Washington D.C. in May 2017. Our group included IIABW President Lori Reed, President Elect Rob Tripple, Sue Tripple, National Director Sue Knobloch, Treasurer Melissa Power, Young Agent Committee Chair Ryan Porter, Past President John McDonald, Sandy McDonald, Pauline Black and IIABW Executive VP Dan Holst.

We met with Representatives Derek Kilmer, Adam Smith and Denny Heck. We also met with the staff from Senators Cantwell and Murray as well as Representatives Jayapal, Reichert, Newhouse, and McMorris Rodgers. We discussed the following issues with our Congressional delegation.

Flood Insurance

We lobbied for a 10-year reauthorization of a reformed National Flood Insurance Program before it expires on September 30th. Some of the reforms that are being considered include increased use of mitigation practices, updated mapping technologies and the purchase of reinsurance to spread taxpayer risk. We also shared our support for a bill that would allow private flood policies to satisfy the mandatory purchase requirement for flood insurance.



Representative Derek Kilmer



Rep. Adam Smith



Rep. Denny Heck

The NFIP has a debt of over \$24 billion, largely due to Hurricane Katrina and Superstorm Sandy. For more than two decades, up until the 2005 hurricane season, no

taxpayer money had been used to support this program. There has been considerable discussion in Congress on the role of agents and their compensation levels. We explained how time intensive and complicated the program is to sell and how critical agents are in the process.

Health Insurance

On the day that we met with our Congressional delegation, the U.S. House passed the American Health Care Act. In fact, we were not able to meet with many of our legislators because they were on the House floor voting on this bill.

We urged Congress to protect the employer sponsored health care system in any reforms being considered. We asked them to support and co-sponsor the 'Cadillac tax' repeal bill (S. 58/H.R. 173). The 'Cadillac tax' assesses a damaging 40% tax on health plans that exceed a fixed annual cost which is expected to be less than \$11,000 per year for an individual when the law goes into effect on 2020.

We lobbied against the idea that is being considered in Congress to tax employees on the now tax exempt cost of their health benefits if the benefits exceed a certain threshold. This proposal would have a similar effect as the 'Cadillac tax' to discourage employers to offer health plans to their employees.

Taxes

We urged our legislators to reform small business and individual rates along with corporate rates in tax reform efforts. Since the majority of independent agencies are small business pass-through entities (subchapter S corporations, partnerships, sole proprietorships) that file at individual rates, by reforming only corporate rates would further create an uneven playing field for our members.

Insurance Regulatory Reform

We shared how the Big I remains dedicated to preserving the state-based system of insurance regulation. We asked our Congressional delegation to significantly restrict or eliminate the Federal Insurance Office which was created by the Dodd-Frank financial services reform law. FIO has proven to have questionable value for the insurance market and consumers and could evolve into a regulatory force on the federal level.

Crop Insurance

IIABW continued to lobby our Congressional delegation against any attempts to cut or cap premium incentives on the Crop Insurance Program in the 2018 Farm bill. We also advocated for assurances that the private sector will remain the primary distribution force of the flood program.