

AAOPAC Report for MSO Annual Session 10-2-2020

AAO Members Advocate for the Specialty in Washington, D.C

The 2020 Professional Advocacy Conference took place February 25-26 in Washington, D.C. with 121 AAO members, including 44 residents, advocating for the specialty on Capitol Hill.

Upon arrival, the conference attendees went quickly into a training session to prepare to share the specialty's perspective on key political issues with legislators and their staffs. Issues covered included the including the RAISE Act, student loan debt relief, the Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act, and the REDI Act.

Following the training program, attendees enjoyed dinner while listening to congressional speakers, including Rep. Denver Riggleman (R-VA), Sen. Martha McSally (R-AZ), Sen. Jacky Rosen (D-NV), and Sen. Thom Tillis (R-NC), with six additional legislators attending the following dessert reception.

During breakfast the following morning, attendees heard from Mr. Michael Graham, senior vice president of government and public affairs at the American Dental Association.

Attendees then departed for a day of visits to legislative offices, where they met with elected officials and Congressional staff. AAO members attended a total of 177 meetings on Capitol Hill, with 42 Senate meetings and 135 House meetings.

Your MSO crew put on many miles to ensure that our voices were heard from one end of "The Hill" to the other. Some of our members (you know who you are that somehow were given special privileges) were even allowed to take the Congressional underground train to expedite passage through those spread out buildings of Congress.

Especially rewarding when attending the AAO Professional Advocacy Conference is the camaraderie of all AAO constituent members from east to west, south to north coming together for the purpose of improving our member's and staff's professional and personal lives; lives of our patients and families all across the states. Whether we have success in pushing needed legislation through or are less than fruitful, we feel united and proud in the cause. If you have not attended an AAO Professional Advocacy Conference, I believe doing so would pleasantly enlighten you. Please reach out to me at anytime to join in AAO efforts on Capitol Hill.

The AAO is actively working with our federal lobbyists to monitor all federal measures being advanced to address the impact that COVID-19 has had on our members both as healthcare professionals and small business owner. We are working to ensure that orthodontists are included in any such relief measures. Our federal advocacy is made possible thanks to the generosity and support from members like yourself who contribute to the AAO Political Action Committee (AAOPAC). MSO members have over the last

many years been leaders in donations to this important PAC. Our MSO members realize that it does take a village of members and of finances to make a difference.

Our AAOPAC has supported congressional candidates who are like-minded in support of our orthodontic profession. Whether it is easing the burden of student debt or supporting small businesses, the AAOPAC is, and will continue to be, the orthodontists' voice in D.C. This has been 25 years now of AAOPAC support and we especially, during this trying and epic year, understand and recognize the importance of our voices being heard not only in Washington, D.C. but also around the country.

As you know, 2020 is an important election year, with not only a presidential election, but also 435 House of Representatives and 35 Senate races. If you'd like to know more about the AAO's efforts at the federal level to advocate for its members- including participating in policy discussions to make sure orthodontists concerns are understood as regulatory agencies (OSHA, CDC, HHS) make decisions about the safe operation of businesses- you can click [here](#).

Recently, the AAO, through the support of the AAOPAC, has been championing efforts at the federal level that support our members as health care professionals and small business owners, including:

- Advocating for small business relief for its members in the coronavirus relief packages
- [Inclusion of a regulation from the Secretary of Labor that employers with less than 50 employees may be exempt from the emergency paid sick leave requirements](#)
- Urging members of Congress to support legislation to [increase funding for the PPP and EIDL program](#)
- Participating in virtual meetings with members of Congress, including
 - Senators Bill Cassidy (LA), John Cornyn (TX), Susan Collins (ME), Cory Gardner (CO), Mark Warner (VA), Leader Mitch McConnell (KY), Steve Daines (MT)
 - and Representatives Brian Babin (TX), Frank Pallone (NJ), Abby Finkenaur (IA), Cheri Bustos (IL)
- Participating in policy discussions to make sure orthodontists have a seat at the lawmaking table
- Providing an avenue for members to [contact their legislators](#)

AAOPAC and COGA will meet next on September 15, 2020 by virtual zoom session in lieu of a face to face meeting in Washington D.C. We have much to discuss and decisions to make concerning goals and contributions during this exciting political marathon year.

During our MSO combined annual session on October 2 and 3, our generous AAO Trustee, Dr. Mike Durbin will be conducting a match program for contributions to the AAOPAC. Thank you Mike for being a leader who keeps giving and giving of his time, expertise and financial well-being. We encourage you to support the AAOPAC along

with Mike during his match program so that his dollars and yours stretch even farther for the benefit of our great orthodontic profession.

We have indeed reached some challenging times, but remember that through all of this, the AAOPAC continues to advocate for you!

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Deborah Lien

MSO Representative to the AAOPAC