

## **COUNCIL ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS (COGA)**

Governmental advocacy has had an exceptionally busy year. Recognizing the expanding needs of our membership regarding: easing of student loan debt, improving healthcare policy and adopting reforms for small businesses. Not to mention advocating for the public's best interest regarding DIY aligners.

Recently, Congress had repealed the Medical Device Tax, a long-term goal of the AAO. Additionally, our legal department has been traveling around the country, addressing individual state boards with oversight on the practice of dentistry – protecting the health and wellbeing of the public and advocating on behalf of our specialty. This has been paid for thru the Component Support Legal Fund.

On the Federal Level, we engaged a Washington lobbying firm (Cozen-O'Connor) to engage both the FDA and FTC agencies regarding DIY aligners. A letter was signed and sent by nine members of congress, addressing our concerns about this unrestricted/unsupervised practice of dentistry and asking for agency oversight.

Last week we hosted the Governmental Advocacy Meeting in Washington, D.C. at the Hamilton Hotel. There were 121 attendees including 44 residents. We had bi-partisan visits to our meeting, including 5 representatives and 2 senators, whom expressed support for our goals and objectives as a professional advocacy group. The following day we had Hill visits to various congressional offices, expressing our "asks" on behalf of our specialty. There were 177 total meetings (42 Senate and 135 House) over the course of the day.

The Following is a brief summary of our congressional asks:

- Raise Act ( H.R.1366/S.503) - Flexible Spending Account legislation
- Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act ( H.R.1379/S.560) - Assuring ongoing care for skeletal/congenital deformities
- Student Loan Refinancing & Recalculation Act (H.R.1899)
- REDI Act (H.R. 1544) - interest deferment for all orthodontic residents during training.
- Student Loan Tax Elimination Act (S. 1696) - Eliminates origination fees
- Expanding Access to Graduate Education Act of 2019 (H.R.3334) - permit usage of unused Pell Grant for graduate school.

Lastly, our existing contract with our federal lobbyist is expiring in May. An RFP was sent out and there were 20 responses. A committee was formed and we interviewed the three finalists. A recommendation has been forwarded to the BOT for review and action at their next meeting.

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