

American Association of Orthodontists Political Action Committee (AAOPAC)

AAOPAC members met alongside COGA members on February 22, 2021 by virtual format. The AAO then held the Professional Advocacy Conference that evening and the following day, February 23, during which 87 AAO members met with the following Congressmen and women:

- Representative Ann Wagner, Missouri
- Representative Brian Fitzpatrick, Pennsylvania
- Representative Grace Meng, New York
- Representative Yvette Clarke, New York
- Representative Drew Ferguson, DDS, Georgia
- Representative Brian Babin, DDS, Texas
- Representative Jeff Van Drew, DMD, New Jersey
- Representative Mike Simpson, DMD, Idaho
- Representative John Garamendi, California
- Representative Robin Kelly, Illinois

Due to scheduling issues, we were unfortunately unable to meet with our Senate members. Legislators and members agreed this is not the way we hoped to foster new relationships and support existing ones (via Zoom), but the calls went well and our legislative priorities were addressed by all generations involved. Since four of the calls were with members of Congress who are dentists, their concerns matched and aligned with many of our AAO member concerns.

In a review of the AAO's Federal Election Success/Political Giving for 2019-2020, we can see that the AAOPAC's strategic giving successfully aided in the reelection of many of our Representatives and Senators who had supported and sponsored AAO Legislative Priorities. This includes leaders who are advocates for consumer protection issues, student loan reform, small business COVID relief, McCarren-Ferguson insurance industry antitrust changes and many other priorities of AAO orthodontists.

Overall, the AAOPAC raised a total of \$500,519 from its members in the 2019-2020 federal election cycle. The AAOPAC contributed a total of \$508,800 to candidates and committees. A total of 95 candidates backed by the AAOPAC won their election this year, and eight candidates lost their election. Overall, 92 percent of AAOPAC-backed candidates won during the 2019-20 federal election cycle. AAOPAC-backed Democratic Senators won 100 percent of their seats. AAOPAC-backed Democratic House candidates won 89 percent of their races. Of the Republican Senators supported by the AAOPAC, 74 percent won their seats and of the Republican House Representatives there was a 93 percent win.

The AAOPAC contributed \$18,500 to seven leadership PACs and a combined \$75,000 to national party committees in 2019 and 2020 including the National Republican Congressional Committee, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, and the National Republican Senatorial Committee.

The AAO's federal lobbyist team at Cozen O'Connor has assisted diligently in the process of staying alert to legislative issues that affect the AAO and our member's interests. The AAOPAC regularly reviews recommendations from Cozen O'Connor as we consider contributions to candidates whose views are consistent with our AAO goals. The AAOPAC also serves to reinforce the goals of the entire dental profession in general as we support candidates to whom other PACs have already contributed the maximum amount that is allowable by law.

During the COVID-19 shutdowns, many state and federal governmental bodies paused in their passage of regulations and legislation during March, April and May 2020. The AAO during and subsequent to the shutdown worked persistently to make sure that legislators knew before the fact when orthodontic issues would be coming to them from a state and/or federal level.

The AAO continues to foster excellent relationships with many key legislators on Capitol Hill and will be working hard to develop further relationships with our newly elected legislators who hold similar views and support of AAO legislative priorities. Without these relationships with our elected Senators and Representatives, the ability to make a demonstrable influence and difference in governmental happenings is seriously in jeopardy. Please consider supporting your AAOPAC by going to aaoinfo.org/advocacy/aao-pac.

Thank you for allowing me this amazing opportunity to serve the MSO as your AAOPAC Representative.

Deborah Lien
Rochester, Minnesota