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## THE CHAMBER'S ANNUAL D.C. FLY-IN



Our Annual D.C. Fly-in this year was sponsored by CBA Companies (Comprehensive Benefits Administrators) of Norwell. The trip was led by Chamber Chairman George Toma of George Washington Toma, Vice-Chair Jim Dunphy of South Shore Bank, Gov. Affairs Committee Chair Deirdre Savage of Blue Cross and CBA President Mike McKenna. In

addition to meetings with Senators Warren and Markey and Congressmen Keating and Lynch we met with the U.S. Chamber and Smart Growth America—a non-profit focused on smart land use policies to promote infrastructure and housing.

Some of the messages heard and conveyed:

- Expect only a short-term extension on Flood Insurance as everyone anticipates a change in committee leadership—regardless of whether or not control of the House flips. The U.S. Chamber has now lined up in favor extending National Flood Insurance.
- While healthcare costs continue to weigh on small businesses Congress is suffering battle fatigue on the issue and not eager to re-engage for some time—leaving it up to the Administration and states to lead any real movement.
- We continue to press the case for regulatory relief on community banks. None of our delegation voted in favor of the recently passed amendments to Dodd-Frank but it is clear that Congress is hearing from business voices that regulatory overreach is having unintended consequences on Main Street. Sen. Warren's take was that the reform efforts will actually increase the pressure on consolidation and cost us more community banks. Congressman Lynch offered to participate in another Chamber sponsored forum with our banking community.
- We discussed our housing agenda with our Congressman and Senators. Housing is more of a state issue but it tied in with discussion on infrastructure. There was strong skepticism of the President's approach which calls for larger local/state funding and smaller federal contributions than past federal formulas for infrastructure funding.
- Both Senators were optimistic about moving forward with dredging of Plymouth Harbor in time for the Plymouth 400<sup>th</sup> celebration and the return of the Mayflower. They have both done some good work on moving this forward.

- Special thanks to Jim Brett and the New England Council for letting us join them in their annual Capitol Hill reception with Congressman and Senators from around New England.

We had a lengthy meeting with [SMART GROWTH AMERICA](#) We came away more convinced that our key strategies for growth with South Shore 2030 are correct but that other cities, counties and states are far ahead of the South Shore in their commitment to compete for growth.



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## FROM PETER FORMAN'S DESK



Back home the Chamber Board has been discussing the proposed ballot questions on nurse staffing, minimum wage increases and paid leave. The Board has already voted to oppose the nurse staffing proposal. We are preparing position papers on the questions that finally make it to the ballot.

Democratic Gubernatorial candidate Jay Gonzalez sat down for lunch with a small group of South Shore businesses in April. Republican Attorney General

candidate Dan Shore met with the Government Affairs Committee. We expect to hold similar forums for other candidates over the summer.

Locally, our affiliated local Chambers have hosted informal meetings with local businesses to welcome new Braintree Town Councilors Timothy Carey and Dave Ringius. In Weymouth, new elected Councilors Christopher Heffernan and Fred Happel met with some of our Weymouth businesses. Connecting our businesses with local officials helps build the healthy collaboration that leads to stronger community development.

The Chamber has been actively supporting the Governor's [HOUSING INITIATIVE](#) which will help promote more of the type of housing we support in our housing agenda.

While Congress faces battle fatigue on the healthcare front we continue to wave the flag for small business. We have raised objections to a group of new mandated benefit bills. The Legislature needs to be reminded that new mandated benefits don't apply to the growing number of self-insured plans leaving the higher costs to smaller businesses.

A state coalition of business groups, including the Chamber, are seeking ways to reduce insurance costs by diverting people from inappropriate and costly Emergency Room visits to more appropriate and less costly venues. Frankly the hospitals themselves have been leading the way in trying to educate patients about more appropriate levels of care but there is a role for employers to help inform and educate employees.

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Comprehensive Benefits Administrators is the 2018 Sponsor of the Government Affairs programming. The Chamber does not endorse candidates.

Our Government Affairs programs are intended to promote engagement between Chamber members and candidates or office holders, regardless of party.



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