

How Does the Colorado Association of REALTORS® Select Candidates to Support?

Given that our Association spends a lot of time and effort to raise money in support of REALTOR® friendly candidates, this is a logical question. In reality, by the time we are deciding which candidates to support, we are well into the “political cycle of life.” The cycle includes raising money through RPAC, interviewing candidates, compiling a detailed voting record, possibly getting involved in campaigns, without coordinating with the campaigns, through independent expenditures and, ultimately, working with these lawmakers once they get elected. Then the cycle starts all over again two years later. So let’s answer the endorsement question by explaining the process CAR uses to decide which candidates will receive REALTOR® support at the federal and state level.

Federal Candidates

Let’s use U.S. Congressman Mike Coffman as an example, since he is running for re-election this year. Coffman is opposed by Democratic candidate Andrew Romanoff. Coffman is the incumbent finishing his third term and Romanoff, the former Colorado Speaker of the House, has never been in Congress. Coffman has an established voting record on REALTOR® issues and Romanoff has no record at all in Congress.

With incumbents running for re-election at the federal level, NAR will review their voting record on important REALTOR® issues and several other factors important to our industry, such as key committee votes, access by NAR staff, etc. If the legislative record is good and NAR believes the incumbent deserves REALTOR® support, they work with CAR to review the record and make a joint recommendation for support to the REALTORS® Political Action Committee Trustees in Washington, D.C.

If NAR and CAR decide to support a challenger over the incumbent, it’s because the incumbent’s record on NAR and CAR issues is not very good. If this is the case, CAR and NAR will ask a challenger to fill out a detailed questionnaire on critical REALTOR® issues, hold a face-to-face candidate interview with members of the CAR Political Action Committee (CARPAC) and make a recommendation to the NAR Trustees. The NAR Trustees have the final say.

In either case, a decision to support or oppose a candidate is made with great attention paid to two important factors: for an incumbent, what is the candidate’s record; and for a new challenger, how would they likely vote on real estate issues? The process to reach a decision is very thorough.

State Candidates

For the statewide offices of Governor, Treasurer, Secretary of State and Attorney General, the CAR Board of Directors must approve support of a candidate for statewide office. Prior to approval of the CAR Board, the vetting process to reach a decision is rigorous.

Decisions on statewide candidates start with the Colorado Association of REALTORS® Political Action Committee (CARPAC), a formal committee of CAR that includes members from across the state. This committee reviews the record of incumbents, compares that record with required information on potential challengers, and provides a critical evaluation of all the facts surrounding a candidate and the race. Every facet of the candidate(s) is reviewed, discussed, and ultimately voted on by this committee first.

The next step involves the CAR Board of Directors. By the time a final decision is made on any statewide race, at least two major committees of your organization, including the CAR Board of Directors, have been fully educated on the merits of the candidate(s) and the possible consequences of their election. The Board must vote to approve the decision/recommendation of the CARPAC.

In individual legislative seats, the Political Committee (PC) and Small Donor Committee (SDC), two subcommittees of the CARPAC, have final authority. In legislative seats with no incumbent running (open seats), an interview team comprised of CARPAC members, CAR Legislative Policy Committee (LPC) members, and local board/association leaders conducts a formal face-to-face candidate interview with most all candidates running in a specific district with recommendations going first to the CARPAC and then to the PC and SDC. More often than not, CARPAC and the PC and SDC will accept the interview team’s recommendation.

With incumbents, it starts with their record but also considers other factors as well. If the incumbent has a record of support with CAR, they receive REALTOR® support using much the same criteria as NAR’s RPAC Trustees consider. If the incumbent’s record is poor, both the incumbent and any challengers are interviewed for possible support.

Conclusion

While you may or may not always agree with the recommendations of your Association, the vetting process for candidate selection is both thorough and logical. Candidates, both Democrat and Republican, who support the “REALTOR® Party”, are recommended for support. Vote for the candidate of your choice, but factor in the work of your Association when you decide. It’s not an arbitrary process. Your local, state and national REALTORS® Associations care about your ability to succeed in the real estate business and that’s why they put in the time and effort to offer suggestions on which candidates are the most REALTOR® friendly.

