

Member Spotlight: Mike Pappas

ABC Grassroots features ABC members who live the motto "Get Into Politics or Get Out of Business". As political self-starters, these members explain how they made the jump from the construction world into the political world, why their involvement is important and how it has made a difference in their lives.

Meet Mike Pappas

Since the ripe young age of 13, construction attorney Mike Pappas has volunteered for numerous campaigns--from small local elections to state legislative, gubernatorial and presidential elections. Whenever he sees a need, he tries to help.

Currently an attorney with Harrison Law Group in Baltimore, Pappas takes time out to serve as the Parliamentarian for the Maryland state GOP, as well as the elected member of the Baltimore County Republican Central Committee. On Monday afternoons, he can even be heard discussing the latest political news on a local radio talk show.

Upon joining ABC, Pappas immediately started working with the ABC Maryland Joint Legislative Committee. Currently he and the committee are working to combat several pieces of legislation in the Maryland General Assembly. Namely, there are a number of bills proposed to punish contractors who misclassify their employees as independent contractors; however, they all would have the unintentional effect of creating more problems than they solved for merit-shop contractors. With a team of ABC chapter staff and members, Pappas and the Committee secured a meeting with the Maryland Commissioner of Labor and other important lawmakers--presenting them with suggested improvements to the bill.



As a member of ABC, Pappas reached out to legislators and gave a voice to merit-shop contractors in Maryland. He has really been a champion of legislation for ABC and his efforts along with those of the committee will likely help to prevent some bad bills from moving through the General Assembly this year.

Q & A

Can you please describe your politics/grassroots activities and what were the results?

I got involved with my first political campaign 25 years ago at age 13 as a volunteer for a state legislative candidate in South Carolina. I stuffed envelopes and went door-to-door delivering literature. Our candidate lost the election, but I acquired an interest in politics that has never subsided.

What was the impetus for becoming involved with ABC's political efforts?

In my first few months at the firm, several of our clients were affected by recently passed legislation. I jumped at the chance to be a part of the ABC Maryland Joint Legislative Committee when I learned my firm was a member of ABC. I wanted to proactively help to protect the interests of our clients before they needed costly legal help.

What do you like about communicating with your legislators?

Communicating with our local legislators reminds me that I am truly a part of a responsive democracy and our legislators are employees of the people. When a legislator thanks you earnestly for helping him or her to understand the affect of legislation upon a constituent's business, it makes me feel like I am truly an integral part of the democratic process.

What is your proudest political/grassroots moment?

I am proud of everything I have done at the grassroots level in both partisan politics and legislative advocacy with the ABC Joint Legislative Committee. No one thing stands out in my mind. I've seen some bad bills go away before they were ever able to negatively affect businesses. That makes me proud.

What is your most significant experience with a legislator and what is the most significant thing a representative or senator has said to you?

The most significant thing ever said to me by a legislator was "thank you." My most significant experience with a legislator has not happened yet. It is always the next interaction that will be the most significant.

What do you feel you have accomplished by staying active and involved in politics?

I am part of the process. When I hear people discussing politics and politicians, I always ask, "Are you involved?" "Did you take the time to get informed and get involved?" Our democracy in the United States is second to none in the world in terms of access by the people. By staying involved, I am doing my part to help shape and support our government.

What is your favorite moment from your campaign experience?

My favorite moment came when I was working late on the night of the election in 2002 when Governor Ehrlich won the State House. I voted and then went to work on a huge project for a client. I remember having an AM radio on and listening to the reports come in. That was a great night.

How much time do your efforts normally consume in a given day/week/month?

During a normal year my ABC Advocacy work takes up about 70 hours over the 90 day legislative session in Maryland and another 50-70 hours during the rest of the year. This year I expect to spend more hours dealing with legislation when the session is over.

Why you think it is important to be involved in politics and grassroots activities?

Business is, by its nature, political and politics almost always affects business. Getting involved in politics is part of ensuring that your business will be around for a long time. The grassroots level is the easiest place to get involved and to help make a difference!