

Congressional Cooperative Business Caucus

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CAUCUS CO-CHAIRS

REP. ED ROYCE (R-CA)
REP. MARK POCAN (D-WI)

CAUCUS OVERVIEW

In late 2015, the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on House Administration accepted the registration of the much-anticipated bipartisan Congressional Cooperative Business Caucus. Co-chaired by Rep. Ed Royce (R-CA) and Rep. Mark Pocan (D-WI), the caucus is tasked to promote the cooperative business model as a viable market solution and policy option to solve today's public policy challenges. The caucus will also serve to educate and inform policymakers on those issues before Congress, the Administration and the broader public. The caucus is a tangible result of last year's Hike the Hill effort during NCBA CLUSA's first advocacy-themed Annual Cooperatives Conference. During meetings with more than one-third of the Senate, NCBA CLUSA members and supporters asked lawmakers to support a bipartisan, cross-sector Congressional platform that would convene and unite co-ops around their shared values and objectives. Going forward, this caucus will drive a significant portion of NCBA CLUSA's advocacy work at the federal level. The caucus will provide greater visibility, education and awareness of cooperative businesses and work to demonstrate their economic impact nationwide.

GOALS

- Represent thought leaders, advocates and practitioners from the public and private sectors as they encourage policy and legislation that supports and develops co-op businesses.
- Provide an ongoing forum for dialogue between Congress, the Administration and co-op advocates to enhance mutual education, legislative advocacy and initiatives.
- Work closely alongside and complement USDA's Interagency Working Group on Cooperative Development.
- Seek opportunities for public education initiatives that raise awareness of the impact of cooperative businesses on the nation's economy.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide opportunities and platforms for leading cooperative experts to speak and demonstrate how their work advances caucus mission and goals.
- Provide opportunities to connect likeminded and influential policymakers to leading cooperative experts and model practitioners.
- Organize occasional media announcements and events during pivotal times in the policy process to ensure that the caucus' voice is heard and reflected in those discussions.
- Work to establish periods of recognition and/or awards that recognize the importance and leadership in the advancement of cooperative business.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The Congressional Cooperative Business Caucus comes at a time when NCBA CLUSA is making strides to advance the cooperative agenda in the U.S.

INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP

In October 2015, the U.S. Department of Agriculture held the first meeting of the Interagency Working Group on Co-operative Development—a provision NCBA CLUSA worked hard to ensure the inclusion of in the Farm Bill.

RURAL CO-OP DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM

Every year, NCBA CLUSA monitors Congressional budget negotiations to ensure consistent funding for the Rural Cooperative Development Grant (RCDG) program, a key advocacy priority pivotal to the interests of rural cooperative enterprise, job creation and productivity.



Members of the Cooperative Youth Council pose for a selfie with Senator Al Franken at NCBA CLUSA's advocacy conference in May 2015.

ANNUAL ADVOCACY CONFERENCE

In May 2016, NCBA CLUSA will host its second annual advocacy-themed Annual Cooperatives Conference. Last year, NCBA CLUSA members and supporters met with more than one-third of the Senate and heard from Representative Jim McGovern (D-MA) and Senators Al Franken (D-MN) and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), who said “cooperative issues are really bipartisan issues.”

PROTECTING THE CO-OP BRAND

As the nonprofit insurance companies created under the Affordable Care Act faced media scrutiny in 2015, NCBA CLUSA worked with journalists to clarify the distinction between successful, member-owned co-ops and so-called “CO-OPs,” or Consumer Operated and Oriented Plans, the majority of which are not run as cooperative businesses.

FROM OUR CEO

“We are thrilled by the formation of this historic caucus dedicated to advancing the role of cooperatives in the nation’s economy at the federal level. We worked hard on behalf of our members and co-ops across the country to secure this caucus as an outlet for raising awareness of and advancing the cooperative business model.”

—Judy Ziewacz, interim CEO and president, NCBA CLUSA

Founded in 1916, NCBA CLUSA is the trade association for cooperative businesses in the U.S. and an international development organization active in Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America. For 100 years, NCBA CLUSA has advanced, promoted and defended co-op enterprise, highlighting the impact that cooperatives have in bettering the lives of individuals, families and communities.

NCBA CLUSA

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