PROTECTING ARCHITECTS’ CAREERS

HISTORY - Maryland Architects PAC
Founded in 1995, the Maryland Architects PAC works hand-in-hand with AIA Maryland to achieve its legislative goals. The Maryland PAC enables member architects to more fully participate through the support of legislators who share architects’ concerns about issues facing the built environment and the architectural profession. Decisions made in the General Assembly can enhance or impair the way we do business in dramatic ways. Through the Maryland Architects PAC, architects multiply their individual political effectiveness and increase the visibility and presence of the profession. Your contributions provide a powerful voice in promoting the interests of all Maryland architects thereby improving the practice of architecture within the State of Maryland.

PURPOSE – Maryland Architects PAC
Did you know that the Maryland Architects PAC is the only political action committee in the State protecting your interests? As working professionals, we need a strongly funded PAC in order to support our practice and livelihood. The Maryland Architects PAC’s sole purpose is to protect and advance the profession of architecture. Laws passed in Annapolis can enhance or impair the way we do business in dramatic ways.

Special interest groups continually approach Maryland legislators, and those legislators’ opinions are often influenced by the strongest voice. For architects, this is achieved through relationship-building events at the AIA Maryland headquarters, attending fundraisers, direct contributions, and through other special events. Contributions and admission to fundraising events require financial resources through the Maryland Architects PAC.

Each year we carefully monitor bills that we may need to either support or attempt to defeat. Some potentially troublesome bills have been building momentum over the past several years. A few of these, if passed, will negatively change the way architecture is practiced in the State, affecting all architects and architectural firms, large and small.

OUTCOMES – Maryland Architects PAC
As we monitor bills, we provide input on bills or solicit sponsors on bills that we propose, to help protect the interests of the architectural profession. AIA Maryland has a contract with Semmes, Bowen and Semmes to engage Joe Miedusiewski as our lobbyist. He works for us in many ways, mostly by tracking upcoming bills, determining how they may impact our profession, finding access to the legislature, and then providing guidance and input to each bill so that our interests are protected.

In many ways Joe Miedusiewski, AIA MD’s lobbyist, is the face of the Maryland Architects PAC. It is imperative for him to gain access to legislators and show that we as an organization are present and at the table. One of the most effective ways to accomplish this is through attendance at legislative fundraisers and other planned events. Tickets for fundraisers and similar events are purchased solely by the Maryland Architects PAC. Ticket prices range from $150.00 to $500.00 each. It does not take many tickets to run...
through a few thousand dollars, and that is about what our budget is each year. Right now we can only support a fraction of the candidates that we should be fully engaged with as a result of a very small budget.

**AIA MD MEMBERS – Role and Responsibilities**

Your financial contribution is crucial. The Maryland Architects PAC does not receive any funds from AIA National, and there is a very low cap to what the Maryland chapters can provide. Additionally, there is not a set-aside from local or state dues. It is therefore imperative that our members directly contribute, to enable us to advocate effectively on behalf of our profession. This year and every year we aim to get all members to participate. You should know that 100% of your chapter boards and state board members contribute to the PAC fund, in addition to the time that they donate.

It doesn’t matter if you are a young IDP architect or a 25-year veteran; the Maryland Architects PAC is vital to protecting your interests. We defend against bills that could cost you the ability to be registered, to practice, or which would allow others to take a piece of your practice, even though they aren’t an architect. It amazes me that young architects eagerly talk about supporting USGBC’s efforts, or eagerly attend the awards banquets, but will not contribute to protecting their profession. Each of us chose this profession on purpose, as a life’s endeavor, knowing we are in a special profession, rewarding in so many ways. It is that very quality that the Maryland Architects PAC helps to protect, and there are many special interests that want to erode and redefine our profession.

Please – as a professional, and as a firm – contribute to the Maryland Architects PAC. The next time you look at a LEED project in Maryland, know that the Maryland Architects PAC helped get the bill requiring LEED Silver to be passed in the state of Maryland. There is currently no professional services tax, and the Maryland Architects PAC continues to help keep that from happening. State funded projects use a Quality Base Selection process because fee bidding was outlawed, with the help of the PAC. Interior Designers seeking professional licensure for design services were defeated in part because of the Maryland Architects PAC. A host of other bills never made it to the floor because the Maryland Architects PAC provided access helping us get our message out to prevent the bill from moving forward and gaining traction. This is what the Maryland Architects PAC does for you. Please make a commitment to support a fund that focuses on you and the interests of your practice.

Jason C. Winters, AIA, LEED BD+C
2013 Maryland Architects PAC
Committee Chair

**Ways to Donate:**

Pay by Credit Card Online via PayPal  OR
Pay by check: Make check payable to The Maryland Architects PAC and send to:

The Maryland Architects PAC
c/o AIA Maryland
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