

Workforce Development

Helping You To Meet Your Workforce Challenges

Training the Next Generation:

Playing the 'Long Game' in the Halls of Congress

By Bernie Nagle, Executive Director, PMPA

In coordination with our advocacy team in Washington, The Franklin Partnership and PMPA members recently spent two hectic days thrashing shoe leather in the halls of the House and Senate office buildings in D.C. Our group of ten split into subgroups and executed an elaborate series of meetings with senators and representatives serving the corresponding geographies of our members. In concise, 20-minute conferences, we articulated clearly and forcefully the legislative priorities for members of the precision machining industry. While we were certainly not the only interest group roaming the halls of Congress, I can assure you with the expertise of our associates at The Franklin Partnership, we were among the most prepared and represented.

As an avid runner for many years, I can confidently attest to the effectiveness of the physical workout we received running all over Capitol Hill, but to gauge the effectiveness of our advocacy efforts, you need look no further than the image to the right.

Our final meeting of the day took place in the office of Speaker of the House Paul Ryan. How, you may wonder, does a group of midwestern small business owners get 30 minutes of Speaker Ryan's uninterrupted time and attention?

Here's a hint: Third from the left is PMPA member Mike Reader, president of Precision Plus of Elkhorn, Wisconsin, home state of Speaker Ryan. So, the answer is that you get to sit and chat with the Speaker of the House by playing the "long game" in the halls of Congress.



You see, Mr. Reader has known Paul Ryan since the mid-2000s when he began attending Rep. Ryan's local listening sessions and weighing in on legislative topics related to manufacturing. During the 2008-2009 recession, this engagement stepped up considerably and eventually led to a personal visit to the Precision Plus facility in early 2009 where Rep. Ryan toured the plant and met with the entire team. Since 2009, Mr. Reader has had Speaker Ryan in his plant on multiple occasions and visited him in Washington every year.

Over many years, PMPA and several individual PMPA members have cultivated strong personal relationships with elected officials in Washington, D.C. who continue to rise in the ranks – none in Congress higher than Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Mr. Reader's continued dedication to advocacy proves PMPA is making a difference lobbying on workforce development, taxes and harmful regulations. He is not alone. PMPA members from across the country regularly host their senators and representatives for plant tours, CEO roundtables and even political fundraising events.

PMPA is our industry's voice in the nation's capital, but our members are the best advocates. Mr. Reader's real life experience proves that if you play the long game in Washington, it pays off. For more information on how to become involved in PMPA's government advocacy program and make a difference this election season, contact me any time at bnagle@pmpa.org.