2019 AMPAC Award for Political Participation

2019 Winner

Marilyn J Heine, MD
PENNYSYLVANIA

A committed activist on behalf of physicians across the Keystone State, Dr. Heine played an important role in the re-election of Representative Brian Fitzpatrick (R) in Pennsylvania’s first congressional district. The race turned out to be one of the closest in the country with Fitzpatrick winning with 51% of the vote. Dr. Heine organized and executed an effective physicians’ grassroots campaign in support of Rep. Fitzpatrick. As chair of “Physicians for Brian Fitzpatrick,” Dr. Heine coordinated physician fundraising events that not only met campaign financial goals, but also helped to broaden Fitzpatrick’s reach into the local physician community. As a graduate of AMPAC’s political education programs, Dr. Heine did not hesitate to take full advantage of the political tools at her disposal. She effectively used social media to her advantage as she regularly posted messages that reflected the congressman’s positive voting history on important health related issues. At the same time, she used social media to counter the opposition’s mischaracterizations of Fitzpatrick’s positions.

Leaving no stone unturned, Dr. Heine motivated colleagues and helped them write and submit letters to the editors of local news outlets urging readers to reelect Brian Fitzpatrick. As Election Day approached, Dr. Heine turned her attention to the most important element of a political campaign — GOTV. Using the “Physicians for Brian Fitzpatrick” network, posting on social media, and employing “old fashioned campaign tactics” like reaching out directly to friends, family, and colleagues, Dr. Heine made a real difference on Election Day.

The extensive time Dr. Heine committed to the Fitzpatrick campaign, her vital role in its success, and her steadfast dedication to effectively support a pro-physician candidate in a challenging political environment makes her a worthy recipient of the 2019 AMPAC Award for Political Participation.

2019 Nominees

Randy Easterling, MD
MISSISSIPPI

As a past President of the Mississippi State Medical Associate and former member of the AMPAC Board of Trustees, Dr. Easterling has a long and distinguished history in political involvement. Dr. Easterling is the Vice Chairman of the Governor’s Task Force on Opioid and Heroin Abuse and a member of the Governor’s Mississippi Healthcare Solutions Committee. During the last election cycle, Dr. Easterling hosted fundraisers for the Governor, Lt. Governor, and both United States Senators from Mississippi. In his nominating letter, Governor Bryant said; “the contributions of Dr. Randy Easterling to the medical community, this administration and to this state cannot be over-estimated.”

Merrilee Gober, BSN, RN, JD
GEORGIA

As an active member of the AAMA Alliance, MAG Alliance, and the GAMPAC Board, Merrilee has been a fixture at the state Capital for more than a decade serving as a volunteer advocate speaking on maternal and infant health issues. She has also contributed her time and resources to the campaigns of numerous medical-friendly candidates—both Republican and Democrat. Her most recent campaign work was for Leah Addrege, a candidate for state Senate in Merrier’s district. Merrilee took on the role of campaign manager for Ms. Addrege for a special election in November of 2017 and continued in that role throughout the general election of November 2018.

Allen Meadows, MD
ALABAMA

As a campaign volunteer for over 40 years, Dr. Meadows has a long and demonstrated history of political action and volunteering his personal time to help improve his community. In 2018, Dr. Meadows campaigned for Congressman Adheel, developing a personal relationship with him and becoming a trusted source on health care. In the same election cycle, he coordinated a virtual fundraiser for Congressmen Morgan Griffins of Virginia raising $8,000 for his campaign. Dr. Meadows also volunteered for the campaign of Ted Lowry, who was running for the Montgomery County Board of Education. Mr. Lowry won his race against a better-financed opponent and credits Dr. Meadows with playing a vital role in his campaign’s success.

Coy Flowers, MD
WEST VIRGINIA

For over a decade, Dr. Flowers has been a strong advocate for protecting women’s reproductive health in West Virginia. In 2018, the state considered a ballot initiative that he believed would have a negative impact on patients. Dr. Flowers led specific state efforts to defeat the initiative. The coalition taking on this initiative believed it needed a clear, respected voice to clarify the issue for voters. The ‘Vote No on Amendment One’ coalition enlisted Dr. Flowers to aid their mission by talking with voters statewide. Two weeks prior to Election Day, over 105,000 targeted voters were sent a critical mailer from Dr. Flowers. While the initiative barely passed, Dr. Flowers was undeterred because he felt he was standing up for his patients. Dr. Flowers has also worked tirelessly as a fundraiser for “Friends of Medicine” candidates. This includes fundraising for United States Senator Joe Manchin and state Senate Majority Leader Tom Takuba, MD.

Sealy Massingill, MD
TENNESSEE

During the 2018 election cycle, state Senate district 10 became a highly contested race with the Lt. Governor announcing that the race was one of his top priorities. With the Lt. Governor announcement, Beverly Powell was thrust into the spotlight and needed to find a way to win the seat and help advance TMA priorities. He organized a “Doctors for Beverly” group of physicians to support her campaign and hosted numerous fundraisers. His advocacy played a key part in her surprise victory in November.

Mike Patete, MD
FLORIDA

As the President of the FMA PAC, Dr. Patete and the board raised over $2.1 million to help elect physician-friendly candidates in Florida. This money was spent entirely on the elections where 92% of endorsed candidates won. When Dr. Julio Gonzalez announced he was running for Congress, Dr. Patete hosted a fundraiser at his home raising $60,000. However, his focus was not just on raising money. Dr. Patete was also a tireless campaigner, personally walking districts for eight different candidates every Saturday from January to August 2018. He volunteered on his own time because he believed strongly in electing physician-friendly candidates.

This allowed Dr. Patete to develop close personal relationships with the candidates and their families, and he is now viewed as a trusted advisor on health care issues for various elected officials.

American Medical Association
Political Action Committee