

THE APRO POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE NEEDS YOU!



2025 APRO PAC PLAN

Association of Progressive Rental Organizations



2025 APRO PAC

Dear Valued APRO Member and RTO Supporter,

The RTO industry needs your help. Yes, business is thriving. Yes, the industry is growing and servicing more customers than ever and on target to exceed \$15 billion in annual revenue by 2028. But there are many IFs at play for our industry to remain safe and to secure its future:

- IF this established industry continues to be regulated by the robust set of state laws that APRO and industry veterans have fought to establish and keep intact,
- IF government regulators like the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) and Federal Trade Commission (FTC) stay within their statutory lanes and mandates,
- IF APRO and its member leaders are able to continue to guide and develop industry standards and best practices without excessive government involvement and overreach by those that do not understand the RTO transaction and its importance to the American consumer.

While the political and regulatory environment has shifted following the 2024 election, this not a time when we can be complacent. In fact, this is the time to be proactive and more active in telling our story. As we saw in the first Trump administration, the pendulum may appear to swing favorably in DC, but the opposite effect takes place on the state level, where we are likely to see corresponding aggressiveness from state attorneys general and consumer groups filling the vacuum. In many respects, our advocacy efforts have become harder and more expensive to pursue on a multi-state level. Likewise, the CFPB has not gone away, and we are still regulated by the FTC. We cannot let our guard down and must be active in sharing the benefits of the RTO industry and the value of the transaction option for consumers.

The APRO PAC has played a pivotal role in safeguarding the industry as the economic engine behind APRO's legislative agenda. Our industry has survived attacks on the transaction throughout the 1980s and 1990s through aggressive action, educational outreach, and grassroots advocacy. The industry is growing and becoming more valuable every day. We have more to lose now than ever before from misguided and uninformed legislation. This is the time to support the APRO PAC to ensure RTO is known and understood within the halls of Congress.

The APRO PAC is seeking to raise \$30,000 in 2025 so that the PAC can engage lawmakers, maintain relationships, and provide education and resources about the industry. Make no mistake, consumer advocacy and activist groups that do not understand the industry and the transaction are actively making their case to define us in the worst possible way. We must be diligent and persistent to ensure this industry continues to capitalize on the work and efforts of the past forty years.

Our PAC is funded by individual contributions from people like you. On behalf of the APRO PAC and the RTO industry, thank you for considering this important and urgent request.

Sincerely,

Charles W. Smitherman, JD, PhD, CAE
CEO, APRO



2025 APRO PAC Plan

The APRO PAC

The APRO PAC is a bipartisan fund designed to support APRO in its mission of promoting and protecting the RTO industry. The PAC strategy focuses on supporting and nurturing relationships with incumbent and senior members of the House Financial Services Committee (HFSC) and the Senate Banking Committee, as well as Congressional members identified as friends and advocates of the industry with leadership prospects. The APRO PAC is specifically limited to Congressional members currently, though expansion to include state Attorneys General is under consideration.

As the APRO PAC has limited resources, specific focus must be targeted to members and candidates we believe will have the most direct impact and influence on the RTO industry and those who may be asked to support or oppose legislation should such direct efforts become necessary in the future.

The PAC currently maintains a balance of **\$49,878**. In 2024, the PAC raised \$31,050 in contributions from 28 individuals representing 28 APRO member dealers and vendors. Goals for 2024 included securing a healthy reserve balance for the PAC and distributing funds to relevant candidates for the 2024 election. Accordingly, the PAC made donations in the total amount of \$16,500, primarily to HFSC members including the newly appointed Chairman, French Hill.

Fundraising Goals

The APRO PAC seeks to raise and distribute **\$30,000** in 2025. To meet this fundraising goal, the APRO PAC will:

- Seek funding through a bi-annual campaign in March/April and August/September, utilizing this year's annual Legislative Conference, actively seeking participation from APRO Board and VAC members,
- Identify and appoint State Champions to engage APRO member rental dealers and vendors to contribute to the PAC, and
- Request permission from APRO member companies to solicit high-level employee contributions subject to APRO PAC guidelines.

**Total distributions will be contingent on this year's PAC fundraising results.*

Why You Should Contribute to the APRO PAC

The APRO PAC is managed by APRO and provides an important tool for crowdsourcing member contributions and directing funds to election campaigns and key legislators with influence and interest in the RTO industry. Additional efforts and strategies are needed to raise funds and diversify financial contributions as part of the overall legislative plan, particularly given the new 2025-26 Congress and current political landscape.

The APRO PAC provides a means for defensive and proactive action by members. By pooling resources for the specific purpose of engaging lawmakers, the PAC provides an effective means to educate decision makers on the history of RTO, what the transaction is and what it is not, who we are and who we are not. Likewise, through education and engagement, the APRO PAC provides the framework for relationship building with lawmakers who may be called upon in the event legislative action is needed in the future.



2025 APRO PAC Plan

Approach to Advocacy

The APRO PAC follows two basic tenets in this advocacy philosophy. The first is a bipartisan approach. Over the past forty-four years of APRO's existence, the political landscape has been in constant flux on the federal and state level with both major political parties exercising periods of direct control and influence over the RTO industry. On the federal level, single party control of the White House, Senate, and House of Representatives presents a unique scenario for 2025-2026 for an exponential increase in legislation to be enacted. For the APRO PAC and the industry, it is important to develop and maintain friendships on both sides of the aisle.

Second, building and maintaining an appropriate number of knowledgeable industry supporters who serve on committees is fundamental to safeguarding the RTO industry. In many respects, this is equally important as the breadth of support. RTO falls within the scope and jurisdiction of the House Financial Services Committee and Senate Banking Committee that stand at the forefront and as gatekeepers for regulations affecting the RTO transaction and APRO member companies.

Focusing on supporting and nurturing relationships with members of the House Financial Services Committee and the Senate Banking Committee is essential. In addition, APRO's strategy identifies Congressional members who are known leaders, friends, and advocates of the industry. The APRO PAC is specifically limited to Congressional members currently. With limited resources, the specific focus must be on members and candidates we believe will have the most direct impact and influence on the RTO industry and those who may be asked to support or oppose legislation in the future. APRO maintains a list of priority members and candidates for engagement and contributions. This document is available for review by PAC contributors and prospective contributors upon request.

Industry Leveraging and Contributor Input

Other PACs exist within the RTO industry that were formed and maintained by APRO member companies and state rental dealer associations. By coordinating industry fundraising events with these PACs, the APRO PAC can leverage its budget and donor contributions to participate in meetings with members of Congress to further the educational and relational purposes of the APRO PAC. The importance of the APRO PAC being funded and the APRO PAC having a seat at these tables representing the collective voice of the industry as a whole is crucial.

APRO will maintain periodic communications with contributors to keep them apprised of political donations and use of PAC funds. Similarly, it is important for contributors to suggest members of Congress for whom donations should be directed and the rationale for such contributions.

Fundraising Strategy

To meet the stated fundraising goal, the APRO PAC will seek funding through the following activities:

- **State Champions:** Individual RTO leaders will be identified as representatives of states to actively engage APRO member rental dealers and vendors to contribute to the PAC.
- **Contributor Recognition:** PAC contributors will be recognized and thanked annually at Legislative Conference and RTO World for their participation in the PAC.



2025 APRO PAC Plan

- **APRO Board Member Participation:** The PAC will seek participation from current and future APRO Board of Directors with the goal of all directors contributing to the PAC each year.
- **Vendor Advisory Committee Participation:** The PAC will seek participation from current and future Vendor Advisory Committee members with the goal of all members contributing to the PAC each year.
- **Solicitation of Member Companies:** Subject to the limitations set forth below, the APRO PAC will engage APRO member companies to seek permission to solicit employees to contribute.
- **APRO Legislative Conference:** The PAC will utilize the annual Legislative Conference to solicit PAC contributions from attendees.
- **Fall Fundraising Campaign:** The PAC will engage in a second fundraising campaign beginning in late August of 2025 to meet the above-stated participation goals and determine fund availability for end of year contributions to Congressional members.

APRO PAC Committee Policies and Procedures

The Committee will establish an annual strategy for PAC fundraising and distribution. This strategy will be based upon APRO's legislative advocacy goals, important and timely issues facing the industry, the APRO strategic plan, and other relevant factors that may arise each year. The strategy will set forth a ranking of planned political contributions to US House of Representatives members and candidates, US Senate members and candidates, and state Attorneys General. The Committee will establish an annual budget identifying the number and amount of contributions designated for each individual recipient identified in the plan. Contribution amounts will be based on available PAC funds and fundraising goals and targets for the strategy year.

The APRO PAC Committee will maintain data on members and candidates of the US House of Representatives, US Senate, and state Attorneys General. This data will include membership in Congressional committees with specific jurisdiction and influence over the rent-to-own industry, including the Senate Banking Committee and House Financial Services Committees. The data will also include constituency specific information for each prospective recipient, including the number of RTO stores and their state economic impact.

Upon finalization and approval of the plan by the Committee, contributions will be designated as approved for disbursement. The timing of such disbursements shall be case-by-case and subject to coordination with APRO member PACs, Congressional and AG meetings, and the APRO Legislative Conference.

The Committee will coordinate with APRO member PACs and industry lobbyists to leverage and maximize combined contributions for joint meetings and industry sponsored events with PAC fund recipients.



2025 APRO PAC Plan

Solicitation of Member Companies

The Federal Election Commission (FEC) requires APRO PAC to obtain written permission from APRO member companies before it may solicit or accept voluntary contributions from their eligible employees. Eligible employees are defined as executive and administrative personnel who are paid by salary, rather than on an hourly basis, and who have policymaking, managerial, professional, and supervisory responsibilities.

Granting "prior approval" does not obligate a member company or its eligible employees to support the PAC - it simply gives APRO PAC permission to communicate about the PAC in more detail.

Looking Ahead

The political stakes for 2025-2026 could not be higher. Washington is controlled by the Republican party with the White House and majorities in both the House and Senate. While Republican control is typically positive in terms of legislative and administrative action, single-party control will likely entail a significant amount of legislation becoming law. Any perceived slack in attention on the federal level will likely be taken up by state legislators and attorneys general. The next two years will be an active period of legislative activity, necessitating increased focus and attention to advocacy for RTO to ensure legislators understand our industry and the RTO transaction. Please join us!

Note: Contributions to APRO PAC are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. Contributions are voluntary, and all members of APRO have the right to refuse to contribute without reprisal. Federal law prohibits APRO PAC from accepting contributions from foreign nations. By law, if your contributions are made using a personal check or credit card, APRO PAC may only use your contribution to support candidates in federal elections. All corporate contributions to APRO PAC will be used for educational and administrative fees of APRO PAC and other activities permissible under federal law. Federal law requires APRO PAC to use its best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation, and the name of the employer of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year.