

ALTA Advocacy Summit

Description

May 8th through May 10th brought several members of VLTA's past and present Board and other interested parties to Washington, DC for ALTA Advocacy Summit. Never having attended before, but having participated in numerous trips to Richmond for VLTA's Day on the Hill, I was somewhat familiar with the process. What I hadn't expected was the welcome we received, the eagerness our elected officials showed to speak with their constituents, and the attention their staffs paid to our messages.

Virginia had one of largest State delegations in attendance. Only Texas and Florida rivaled the number of participants for the event. In all, approximately 200 participants representing 40 States were present. We were privileged to have **Leah Shimp Vass, Director of Grassroots & Political Affairs at ALTA** join the Virginia delegation. Meetings were set with both Virginia Senators Kaine and Warner and a number of the Delegates. With a clear message and printed material with our talking points in hand, we headed out to the Senate and Congressional offices.

We had three main positions to present, the first and most troubling is FHFA's intention to introduce an unregulated, non-insurance product in the form of Attorney Opinion Letters to homebuyers. This would be a huge blow to our industry and would leave many first-time homebuyers unprotected against all those title issues we are so familiar with. While we found that most of the offices we visited were not well versed on the proposal, we also found the parties we met with were very interested in our perspective and the effect this change would have on the most vulnerable of borrowers.

ALTA is also championing the SECURE Notarization Act of 2023 that would give uniformity and clear guidelines on RON, making it easier for lenders to accept on-line notarizations. Since Senator Warner was one of the patrons of the bill that wasn't a hard sell and we offered our thanks for him leading the charge to get this passed.

The third ask we had was for the passing of the SAFE Banking Act. This act would help legal cannabis businesses across the country have access to safe banking and financial services such as opening a bank account and accepting credit cards.

There were many opportunities to mingle with like-minded people from our industry, and hobnob with Congressional leaders from across the country. And there was a lot of walking. Comfortable shoes are a must. Everyone making a living in this industry should consider participating in ALTA Advocacy Day next year. It is well worth the trip.

Participants in the Virginia delegation were:

- Leah Shimp Vass, ALTA
- Mary Long, VLTA President and State Delegation Lead; Stewart Title & Settlement
- Stephanie Campbell, VLTA Immediate Past President, Westcor Land Title Ins. Co.
- Becky Taylor, VLTA First Vice President and State Delegation Lead, Titleworks Inc
- Sharron Kennovin, VLTA Treasurer, Old Republic Title

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- Heather Lenihan, VLTA At-Large Board Member, Coastal Closings LLC
 - Leigh Hubbard, VLTA Executive Director
 - Katherine Crawford, VLTA Past President, First American Title
 - Matt Reass, RynohLive
 - Quintus Williams, Title Write
 - Lili Farhandi, Razi Exchange
 - Jared Uthe, Doma
 - Lou DiCello, Proplogix
 - Angel Hernandez, Staavy
 - Brian Thompson, Jackson & Campbell PC
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Mary Long

Mary Long joined the Stewart Title family in 1987 and currently serves as President of the local affiliate, Stewart Title and Settlement. Her many years of title experience together with prior real estate industry experiences in Foreclosure, Bankruptcy and Hazard Loss, as well as Relocation Coordination and REO properties, have allowed her to become a resource for training in the areas of underwriting, examination and settlement procedures. Mary serves as the current VLTA President for the 2022-2023 period.

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