**Independent Banker**

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**Portfolio**

[tag] Checks & Balances

[hed] Community bankers return to Capitol Hill

[dek] The 2023 ICBA Capital Summit is next month. Here’s a peek at what you can expect from the premier community bank advocacy event.

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With pandemic restrictions on the Capitol Hill campus finally lifted, the ICBA Capital Summit—the leading advocacy event of the community banking movement—is back and fully in person May 14–17 in Washington, D.C.

Held at the Renaissance Washington, DC Downtown Hotel, the summit offers unparalleled opportunities for community bankers to engage with lawmakers, regulators and government officials—all while networking with peers.

From sharing challenges and success stories to providing the kind of boots-on-the ground insights into what’s happening on Main Street that only a community banker can, the summit empowers community banks to advocate for their industry, community and American growth and prosperity.

The ICBA Capital Summit typically draws nearly 1,000 attendees, excited to advocate for their industry and learn from experts in our nation’s seat of power.

**[subhed] Why in-person advocacy matters**

The summit schedule is packed with meetings with members of Congress and key staff members, organized by ICBA’s affiliated state associations. These meetings reinforce community bankers’ commitment to advocacy, help to build and maintain relationships with lawmakers and their trusted teams, and demonstrate that the issues brought up are important enough to be worth a trip to Washington. This is especially true after several years of virtual meetings and events due to the pandemic.

It's an especially important year for advocacy. The 118th Congress welcomed more than 80 new members in January. In many cases, these new members and their staff have limited experience or knowledge of the community banking industry—but they are eager to learn.

Tasked with learning about a huge array of issues, members of Congress and their staff are seeking resources to help them understand economic trends and policy, financial products and services (including high-profile topics like cryptocurrency) and constituent needs. Community bankers and ICBA can increase their influence by showing we are an informed, helpful source that can play a pivotal role in making it easier to understand these complicated topics and their real-world impact.

Outline how onerous regulations affect your bank’s ability to serve consumers. Share the story of how you helped a small business owner launch a new business when other institutions wouldn’t, or how you assisted a customer with a loan during the pandemic.

[subhead] **You’re not on your own: ICBA’s advocacy training**

Effective communication is key to making the most of these meetings, and no one prepares community bankers for these conversations better than ICBA. From pre-meeting coaching to briefs breaking down talking points on key issues, community bankers walk the halls of Congress confidently and prepared to meet lawmakers and their staff.

Training focuses on how to turn abstract policy issues into examples and stories that demonstrate why these issues matter to community banks and how they affect constituents. You’ll also have empowering conversations on how to “make the ask”—anything from introducing, cosponsoring or voting for a bill—so that you enter meetings with a clear goal and leave with a point to follow up on.

**[subhed] What to expect at the Capital Summit**

One of the highlights of the ICBA Capital Summit is hearing from expert speakers, including legislators, regulators, pundits and others. Last year featured a session with Consumer Financial Protection Bureau director Rohit Chopra, Senate Banking Committee member Sen. Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) and breakout sessions with other regulatory agencies.

This year, ICBA has invited Senate Banking Committee chairman Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) and House Financial Services Committee chairman Patrick McHenry (R-N.C.) to speak. Senior leadership from the regulatory agencies are also invited to attend.

This year’s agenda will include critical issues such as:

* Opposing community bank-adverse climate risk regulation and legislation that would create credit card routing mandates that would force an overhaul of the payments landscape at huge cost to community banks and consumers.
* Ensuring any crypto regulation is effective in **preventing contagion of the traditional financial system**
* Urging passage of a robust 2023 Farm Bill

Pushing back against unfair credit union and Farm Credit System competition

ICBA actively advocates for these issues, but our government relations team can’t do it alone. Legislators and their staff want to hear from you. Don’t let other industries and their agendas push community bankers out of the conversation. Lend your voice to ICBA’s agenda to protect your community and the value of your franchise.

Aaron Stetter is xxx

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**Register for the Capital Summit now**

Sign up to attend the ICBA 2023 Capital Summit and help advocate for change that will ensure vibrant and resilient communities. Don’t miss this opportunity to hear directly from those in power and make the case for your industry and community. To register, visit ***icba.org/capitalsummit***