

Uniting Design and Construction Professionals for Effective Government Advocacy

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SUMMARY

Effective government advocacy involves solid leadership and strategic collaboration. Robert D. Fincham, AIA, has led AIA Kansas's government advocacy effort for over a decade. Under his leadership AIA Kansas has made significant progress in partnering with design and construction professionals to achieve important legislative goals, including the introduction of a Good Samaritan Law for A/E volunteers and tax credits for historic preservation.

LEADERSHIP IN GOVERNMENT ADVOCACY

AIA Kansas surveys report that members consider government advocacy to be the component's most important service. For more than a decade, Robert D. Fincham, AIA, has led this effort for AIA Kansas.

Because AIA Kansas is a small component (600 members), Fincham recognized the need to forge strong ties to organizations with compatible goals to improve the effectiveness of government advocacy efforts. Under his leadership, AIA Kansas established permanent liaison committees with design and construction partners such as the American Consulting Engineers Council of Kansas (ACEC), Associated General Contractors of Kansas (AGC), International Council of Building Officials, Professional Engineers of Kansas, and the American Society of Landscape Architects. He also helped AIA Kansas to forge better ongoing relationships with the many state agencies that regulate architects and architectural practice.

Under Fincham's leadership, AIA Kansas has benefited from a string of successes and the defeat of many proposals that would have adversely affected the profession. Perhaps his biggest achievement has been the united, forceful voice that these varied design and construction groups now present in their joint efforts.

NOTABLE SERVICE

Fincham's impressive record of service includes chairmanship of the AIA Kansas Government Affairs

committee since 2001 and many years of testimony on bills of importance to the component.

During his tenure, Fincham has represented AIA Kansas on a variety of committees that bring design and construction professionals together with state and local government officials around public policy concerns, including the following:

- Partnering Committee of the AIA, ACEC, and the Kansas Division of Facilities Management
- AIA/AGC Liaison Committee
- Alternative Delivery Task Force
- Committee for a Statewide Building Code

He has also represented AIA Kansas in negotiations between the Division of Facilities Management and the state fire marshal and between the secretary of administration and members of the design and construction industry.

SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS

Fincham's record of legislative success includes passage of

- Good Samaritan Law for A/E volunteers who provide disaster assessment services
- Statutes declaring that it is against public policy in construction contracts for one party to ask another to indemnify it for its own actions and errors
- Tax credits for historic preservation
- Bonds to preserve historic theaters

He also helped to defeat many unfavorable legislative efforts, including

- Bidding for architectural services (defeated nine out of nine years)
- Reverse auctions for design and construction services
- Sales tax on services (defeated for six years)

- Opening of design and construction firms' financial records to public inspection

CONCLUSION

Fincham has given his time, energy, and expertise unstintingly to AIA Kansas and its government advocacy program. In addition, he has won the respect and admiration of state government officials and leaders in the design and construction industry. Without his dedication and tireless efforts, the AIA's advocacy program in Kansas would not be nearly as robust and successful.

Corey D. Peterson, executive vice president of the Associated General Contractors of Kansas, offered this assessment: "Bob has earned the respect of his peers, contractors, the Kansas legislature, and state agencies. Bob's ability to 'see the big picture' has made him effective and is greatly appreciated."

RESOURCES

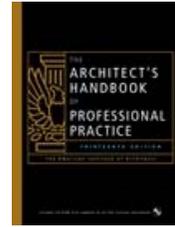
More Best Practices

The following AIA Best Practices provide additional information related to this topic:

- 21.03.02 Regulatory Reform: Reshaping the Florida Board of Architecture
- 21.03.03 Government Affairs Day: Advancing Vital Interests Person-to-Person
- 21.03.03 Building Relationships with Elected Officials

For More Information on This Topic

See also "Public Service and Community Involvement" by William M. Polk, FAIA, *The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice*, 13th edition, Chapter 7, page 172. *The Handbook* can be ordered from the AIA Bookstore by calling 800-242-3837 (option 4) or by sending an e-mail to bookstore@aia.org.



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Key Terms

- Leadership
- Issues
- Political issues