



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 7, 2016

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Record attendance for AAHOA's advocacy conference

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Nearly 230 hotel owners met with nearly 200 congressional offices Wednesday as part of the Asian American Hotel Owners Association's fall advocacy conference, the most ever for the association.

AAHOA chair Bruce Patel said it's a tribute to growing awareness among AAHOA members that lawmakers need to hear directly from business owners on what needs to be fixed.

"Small businesses are fighting to grow and create jobs, but the government is getting in the way. Most of the time it's because of something the government did, but sometimes it's what the government isn't doing," said Patel. "Our goal this week was to connect our members with their lawmakers to share their personal stories of challenges they face and what Congress can do to help."

Chip Rogers, president and CEO of AAHOA, pointed to the Labor Department's new overtime rule as an example of Washington not understanding the impacts their actions have on small businesses. In this case, AAHOA emphasized that the rule will result in demotions for workers.

"The hotel industry provides tremendous upward career potential," Rogers said. "Not only did many AAHOA members build their businesses from the ground up starting with very little, but careers inside hotels also have amazing potential."

A 2015 study indicated that more than half of hotel managers start in entry-level jobs such as housekeeping or checking in guests.

On Tuesday, Sen. Chuck Grassley (R, Iowa), chair of the Judiciary Committee, opened the conference with remarks about his sponsorship of a bill to pause enforcement of the new overtime rule.

In addition to the overtime rule, AAHOA members also talked to lawmakers about the expanded joint employer standard, abusive lawsuits filed under the Americans with Disabilities Act and the benefits of preserving the like-kind exchange tax provision.

Founded in 1989, AAHOA is the largest association of hotel owners in the United States. Its members own nearly one of every two hotels in the U.S.

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