

ASTRA ALL MEMBERS ADVOCACY COMMITTEE MEETING, OCTOBER 22, 2025

Post DC Fly-In Member Zoom Meeting Notes



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MEETING PURPOSE

To debrief on the Washington, D.C. Fly-In, review advocacy progress, and plan next steps for legislative engagement.

OVERVIEW

- The meeting reviewed Astra's recent **advocacy efforts in Washington, D.C.**, focused on addressing the **impact of tariffs** on toy manufacturers and retailers.
- Members shared personal stories and survey results to illustrate how tariffs negatively affect small businesses in the toy industry.
- Discussion centered on **future fly-ins, legislative strategy**, data sharing, and **educating lawmakers** about the toy industry's economic and educational impact.

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

TARIFF IMPACT AND ADVOCACY SUCCESS

- **Ed Desmond** led the Washington, D.C. meetings, leveraging his 17 years of government affairs experience.
- Members met with the Small Business Administration and multiple **congressional representatives** to share the effects of tariffs, including:
 - Canceled orders, layoffs, and reduced profitability.
 - Challenges for companies attempting to bring manufacturing back to the U.S.
- Some lawmakers indicated potential **tariff exclusions** may be granted in the coming months.
- The team's priority is to keep the **toy industry visible in ongoing policy discussions**.

LEGISLATIVE ENGAGEMENT AND THE BERMAN AMENDMENT

- **Hagan** and others reported strong engagement from lawmakers—particularly **Republican members of Congress**—who opposed current tariff practices.

- The **Berman Amendment** was identified as a key legislative opportunity to protect toys and educational products from future tariffs.
- The committee will **draft proposed amendment language** for submission to **Ways and Means Committee members**.
- **Senator Katie Britt (AL)** expressed interest in sponsoring the bill and requested additional survey data from Alabama constituents.

CAPITOL HILL OUTCOMES AND NEXT STEPS

- **Tres and Hagan** shared positive outcomes from meetings on Capitol Hill:
 - Lawmakers valued Astra's member survey data.
 - Received clear guidance to focus on the **Berman Amendment** as a long-term fix.
- **Darby** reported new outreach plans targeting **Republican members of the Ways and Means Committee**, particularly those with trade experience.
- Emphasis placed on **increasing member participation in surveys** to strengthen the advocacy narrative.

FUTURE FLY-IN PLANNING

- Plans are underway for another **fly-in** to D.C., focusing on matching participants with their **district representatives** by ZIP code.
 - Meetings will maintain an **80/20 Republican-to-Democrat ratio** to target legislators with key trade influence.
 - Astra will provide:
 - **Letter templates** for outreach to congressional offices.
 - **Assistance setting up meetings** with local representatives.
- An Advocacy Toolkit** (in development) with talking points and educational resources.

COURT CASES AND LEGISLATIVE MONITORING

- Upcoming cases discussed:
 - **Nov 4:** Learning Resources v. Trump Administration
 - **Nov 5:** Supreme Court Case vs. IEPA and Tariffs
- The **Advocacy Committee will reconvene Nov 6** to review outcomes and refine strategy based on court developments.

MANUFACTURING AND INDUSTRY MISUNDERSTANDINGS

- Members reported confusion among officials regarding what constitutes a "manufacturer" in the toy industry.
- **Sandra** highlighted the need to clarify that many toy companies **contract manufacturing overseas** rather than operate factories domestically.
- **Tres and Darby** explained that moving production back to the U.S. is **cost-prohibitive** due to tooling costs and tariffs as high as 35%.

- Emphasized that toys have traditionally been **duty-free trade items**, making the current tariffs especially burdensome.

SURVEY RESULTS AND DATA STRATEGY

- Recent **industry survey (55 respondents)** provided strong data for advocacy use.
- **Hagan** will work with the committee to **compile anonymized results** for sharing with members and policymakers.
- **Scott** requested access to the results for use in local advocacy and media discussions.
- **Kathy** suggested **reposting the survey on AstraConnect** to increase participation from Astra's broader membership base (~4,000 members).

EDUCATING POLICYMAKERS AND THE PUBLIC

- **Whitney** emphasized the importance of presenting oneself as an **industry expert** when meeting with lawmakers.
- **Seth** suggested gathering **data on how toys are used in schools** to strengthen the educational argument under the Berman Amendment.
- **Tom** noted the need to educate the general public that **U.S. importers—not foreign manufacturers—pay tariffs**, and those costs are ultimately passed to consumers.
- Members reviewed customs documentation to demonstrate how tariffs impact imports from both adversarial and allied nations.