



## AARO President's Report – 2016-2017 excerpt

Neil Kearney, President

The big shake-up in Washington has presented an unprecedented opportunity for AARO's advocacy efforts. Tax reform is on everyone's agenda, and leading Republicans have come out in favor of not just reforming corporate taxation but also changing individual taxation from a world-wide basis to a territorial basis.

With regard to FATCA, many Republicans agree with AARO's position that it should be abolished, and many Democrats are sympathetic to the next best thing, a same country exception so that Americans who live overseas would not have to disclose details about their local banking arrangements. While these are still early days for President Trump and for the 115th Congress, it has become clear that there is an outstanding opportunity to get **action** and that AARO needs to do everything it can to influence the decision-makers.

Therefore we have organized not one but two groups of AARO representatives to go to Washington and fight the good fight, what we call "Overseas Americans Week". The first group, consisting of Secretary Ellen Lebelle, Advocacy Vice-President Fred Einbinder, Asian Director Ross Feingold and myself were there during the week of March 13th. We met with key staff people in the offices of Senators and House Members who have the most influence (senior members of the House Ways and Means Committee, the Senate Finance Committee, and the Joint Tax Committee) and also those Members of Congress who have the most sympathy for our cause (leaders members of Americans Abroad Caucus).

Working closely with AARO's Banking Committee, led by Paul Atkinson, and AARO's Tax Committee, led by Tim Ramier, we developed AARO position papers on FATCA and territorial taxation. Other important issues such as passport revocation and voting rights were also covered. We met with representatives of the US State Department, the American Banking Association and the Tax Foundation. We also managed to scramble around a major snow storm without missing an appointment!

The week of April 24th will see a second contingent of AARO representatives in Washington, led by Communications Vice-President Lucy Laederich and Tax Chairman Tim Ramier. They and others will follow up and expand our relations with Members of Congress, the National Taxpayer's Advocate Office, the IRS and the Social Security Administration.

This advocacy would not be possible without your support.