

Government Affairs

Hillier Group Hosts Congressmen, Business Leaders *ArchiPAC reception connects “what architects believe with what they do”*

More than 50 representatives of design- and construction-related associations and other business leaders gathered at the Washington, D.C., office of the Hillier Group June 7 to meet and greet three U.S. representatives. The event was the first ArchiPAC-sponsored reception in Washington not held at the AIA headquarters. Bringing the representatives—Rep. Brad Carson (D-Okla.), Rep. Steve Israel (D-N.Y.), and Rep. Mike Ross (D-Ark.)—to the offices of an architect was intended to strengthen the connection in the minds of these leaders between what architects believe and what they do.

Robert Hillier, FAIA, was in town to welcome the guests to his firm. He thanked the AIA for sponsoring the event and introduced AIA President John D. Anderson, FAIA, who, in turn, introduced the congressmen.

All three are members of the New Democrats, freshman representatives with centrist leanings. They share similar beliefs on the need for federal support for (and not control over) school facility improvement, for instance.

Carson, who sits on the Resources, Small Business, and Transportation and Infrastructure committees, expressed some dismay that the Democratic Party lacks clear, identifiable core beliefs.

Israel, who sits on the Financial Services and Science committees rejoined that the New Democrats have to govern from



Representatives Carson, Ross, and Israel (left to right) answer questions from the audience of 50 design- and construction-business leaders.




President Anderson (left) shares his viewpoint with AIA Executive Vice President/CEO Norman Koonce, FAIA, and Rep. Carson.

the center to be effective as newcomers. “We have two wings of Congress; you need both to fly,” he said. One mission of particular importance to his constituents is to get prescription coverage in Medicare.

Ross, who sits on the Agriculture, Financial Services, and Small Business committees, agreed with the importance of “getting medicine into Medicare,” he said. Being from rural Arkansas, he also sees “putting a safety net back under farmers” and increasing the availability of hospitals and nurses in rural areas as two of his other missions on Capitol Hill.

One area that raised some disagreement among the three was a question from Dan Williams, AIA, of the AIA Committee on the Environment, about the Bush Administration’s energy policy. The Bush energy-conservation bill “looks green on the outside, but black on the inside,” Israel said. Carson replied that he agreed with the need for increasing supplies of oil. The Democratic and Republican plans should be seen as complementary not exclusionary. “Find oil and pursue alternative energy sources,” Carson said. “Take the slow-glide path . . . Face the difficult tradeoffs.”

If you would like more information about ArchiPAC or hosting an ArchiPAC event, contact Richard McDonnell. rmdonnell@aia.org, or 202-626-7383. 

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