

I Can't Hear You!

Contributed by Ron Pyle
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ASA President Ron Pyle shares his opinion on the importance of staying active on the political front when it comes to small-business issues. Don't be afraid to ensure you're being heard by your elected officials. It's important for this industry, for small businesses overall and for America in general.

At recent town hall meetings across America, citizens are expressing their opinions about health care reform and government spending in a way that we haven't seen in recent memory. Some pundits and entrenched political figures are dismissing these vocal citizens as "plants" or "activists" (which of course, they are), hoping to diminish the attention they are attracting.

In my opinion, the turnout and interest in these important issues signals that there is hope for America. Perhaps people are not going to remain apathetic about the direction we are heading after all. If that is the case, good for America! We need more people showing up at these town hall meetings and writing or calling public officials, demanding accountability from those who were elected to represent us.

In the television coverage of these sometimes raucous events, the most priceless images were the looks of shock displayed by the politicians who apparently had forgotten that their constituents have the right to expect answers from them.

The best thing a small-business owner can do in these difficult times is become educated about the issues and ask questions to determine who best represents their interest. After all, we can easily be misled if we don't know what we want or how it will be paid for.

I believe we are at a critical juncture in history — a time when decisions are going to be made that will determine whether or not our country survives long-term as the beacon of liberty and the greatest economy in the world. The decisions about our future as a nation rest with us, and if we don't register our opinions, loud and clear, we won't have any excuses to tell our children when they ask why their generation doesn't enjoy the freedom and prosperity we have historically known.

When I was in boot camp, I had a typical drill instructor who loved to shout out, "I can't hear you!" when he wanted a louder response from the platoon. Just picture my drill instructor in your mind and don't be afraid to speak up for what you believe in.