Independent Banker

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From the Top by Preston Kennedy

[pull quote]“One friend who fights like hell is better than 10 who just talk.”

**I said before this year’s ICBA Capital Summit** that one friend who fights like hell is better than 10 who just talk. While community bankers have had considerable success in recent years advancing pro-community bank policies, such as the S.2155 regulatory relief law, we have plenty left on our advocacy to-do list.

It includes overhauling Bank Secrecy Act requirements, improving the exam process, rolling back the taxpayer-sponsored advantages of credit unions and the Farm Credit System, promoting equally strong data-security safeguards for other entities, preserving open access to the secondary mortgage market, and more. Just look at ICBA’s Community Focus 2020 platform. It’s a legislative and regulatory agenda designed to promote greater economic opportunity in local communities through a more efficient system of regulation, unbiased laws governing the financial sector, a safer and more secure business environment, and more effective agriculture policies.

Community bankers maintain an ambitious policy agenda. It’s a tall order that no single act of Congress or the president can deliver. To get it done, we need fighters, not merely talkers.

Fortunately, the community bankers who show up at the Capital Summit are fighters. I know this year’s event—which will be taking place right as this column reaches your desk—will prove no different. The crowd of community bankers who make the trip to Washington and hoof it around Capitol Hill to meet face-to-face with their members of Congress are no shrinking violets. They come to fight the good fight!

Now, don’t get me wrong; the trip is plenty of fun. This year, we’re hearing from speakers including FDIC chairman Jelena McWilliams and Senate Banking Committee chairman Mike Crapo (R-Idaho), who led the way on S.2155. And to be honest, the conversation with my brothers and sisters in arms is pretty good, too. But grassroots advocacy like this is the nuts and bolts of how we accomplish our policy goals. It’s why we’ve achieved the “qualified mortgage” relief, Home Mortgage Disclosure Act improvements, the 18-month exam cycle, the Volcker Rule exemption and so on.

All of that took community bankers banding together, rolling up our sleeves and doing the hard work of constant, diligent advocacy. It took a fight.

So thank you, fellow community bankers, for your efforts. As we carry on the push for additional policy gains, I’ll have your back—and I know you’ll have mine.

**My Top Three**

Here are my top fighters (not talkers) on the big screen:

1. The Man with No Name (Clint Eastwood), *A Fistful of Dollars*

2. Will Kane (Gary Cooper), *High Noon*

3. Mongo (Alex Karras), *Blazing Saddles*