



*Vision: To lead, educate and equip members to be productive*

## **2012 Legislative Priorities**

The Charlotte Regional Realtor® Association intends to successfully promote housing affordability, protect rights of property owners and advocate for improvements to the real estate industry at the local, state and national levels. Below is an overview of the issues that the association board of directors, government affairs committee and staff will engage in on behalf of its members.

### **Homeownership**

#### **Voice for Realtors®**

The association will advocate, promote and protect the rights of its members. The association will keep the Realtor® point of view at the center of all discussions and promote the real estate industry throughout the community. (F,S,L)

#### **Limit Housing Taxes**

Charlotte's housing affordability puts our region at a competitive advantage and facilitates greater economic development. Housing affordability is also a key factor in the high quality of life that we enjoy. The association will continue to defend the rights of home buyers and sellers in campaigning against transfer taxes and impact fees. Further, the association supports legislation to eliminate transfer-tax authority by North Carolina counties. (F,S,L)

#### **Oppose Taxing Services**

North Carolina and local governments have considered imposing a tax on services. An individual real estate transaction includes numerous services. If each is taxed, it will substantially increase the cost of buying a home. Realtors® have been instrumental in informing legislators about the disastrous economic impact such taxes would have on home buyers, Realtors® and the housing industry. Realtors® will remain vigilant in the discussion to prevent new taxes on Realtors® and real estate transactions. (F,S,L)

#### **Support the Housing Continuum**

Not everyone is ready for homeownership right now. Realtors® support efforts to provide housing for all of our citizens at all levels of the housing continuum, from homelessness to homeownership. Realtors® believe that everyone deserves safe shelter. Realtors® can act as a resource, especially as it relates to homeownership and the home buying and selling process. (F,S,L)

#### **Promote Housing Affordability**

A home is more than a shelter; it is an investment and a dream-come-true that symbolizes who we are. Realtors® seek to defend the special needs of first-time homeowners and others needing financial assistance by supporting local, state and federal programs and services that assist with homeownership. (F,S,L)

#### **Be a Resource in Property Revaluation**

Realtors® are in a unique position to assist counties in the property revaluation process, which is mandated by state law. Realtors® have on-the-ground knowledge of properties throughout the region and should assist in communicating accurate and timely information about the revaluation process. Realtors® support a fair, timely and accurate assessment process. (S,L)



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### **Homeowners Associations**

Homeowners associations (HOAs) provide guidance and management of neighborhoods and communities. Realtors® support the efficient, honest management of these organizations and will monitor HOAs for unauthorized fees, adverse actions, violations of the Federal Fair Housing Act, and failure to disclose required covenants and restrictions. All information should be easily accessible and non-fee based for all parties. (S,L)

### **Support Housing Trust Funds**

No one appreciates the importance of homeownership more than Realtors®. Realtors® will continue to support funding of the North Carolina Housing Trust Fund, the Charlotte Housing Trust Fund and other local housing-finance agencies to provide financing for affordable housing in the Charlotte region. (S,L)

### **Improve Homeownership and Consumer Protection**

Our legislative efforts will continue to combat mortgage fraud and unscrupulous, non-licensed real estate activity. Realtors® will support legislation to improve the regulation of real estate servicers, as well as to protect access to affordable homeowner's insurance. (F,S,L)

### **Protect the Rights of Property Owners**

Mandates placed on property owners can have an adverse affect on housing affordability and the overall economic health of a community. Development moratoria, transfers of development rights, aesthetic design requirements, mandatory inclusionary zoning, urban-growth boundaries and adequate public-facilities ordinances often threaten the value, usability and legal bundle of rights of ownership. Realtors® seek to keep the rights of property owners at the center of the decision-making process. (F,S,L)

### **Safeguard Consumers**

All Realtors® agree to abide by a Code of Ethics which sets them apart from real estate licensees. All Realtors® are bound by local, state and national laws. Realtors® continue to protect consumers by following the Federal Fair Housing Act and are prohibited from any form of discrimination. Realtors® will continue to work with elected leaders to eliminate discrimination and raise the standards of the real estate profession to serve all citizens equally. (F,S,L)

### **Provide Housing Preservation Tools**

Homeowners should be offered every resource possible to stay in their homes when faced with financial challenges. Realtors® want to protect a homeowner's investment and to be aware of homeownership resources available at all levels of government. Also, Realtors® are interested in creating community partnerships to address challenges related to foreclosures. (F,S,L)

### **Protect Landlord and Tenant Rights**

Property owners have the right to rent and manage their properties as the law allows. When renters violate the law, the property owners' rights should be protected throughout the eviction process, especially when a crime has been committed by a tenant. (S,L)



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### **Support Safe Rental Housing**

Rental homes are a part of the housing continuum. Most homeowners were renters at some point. Realtors® are opposed to any policies that add fees and regulation on rental properties that could affect affordability or livability. (S,L)

### **Monitor Land-Use Proposals**

Through the association's partnership with the Real Estate and Building Industry Coalition (REBIC), Realtors® will actively monitor land-use measures that could limit growth or potentially limit the right of property owners. (S,L)

### **Mortgage Interest Deduction**

The mortgage interest deduction (MID) is a remarkably effective tool that facilitates homeownership. Hard-working American families' budgets are already stressed. Reducing or eliminating MID would pull even more money directly out of their wallets. Realtors® strongly oppose proposals to reduce MID. (F)

### **Quality of Life**

#### **Support Economic Development**

Economic development and growth of a community go hand in hand. Homes are where jobs go to sleep at night. The association will work with the chambers of commerce in the region to support recruiting business and industry to our region. (F,S,L)

#### **Advocate for Equitable Funding of Infrastructure**

In lieu of taxes and fees that target the housing sector, Realtors® will continue to support fiscal measures that are equitable. Realtors® will also continue to have a strong voice in discussions about funding various infrastructures, such as roads, public schools, water and sewer lines, and parks and recreation. (F,S,L)

#### **Support Environmental Sustainability**

Realtors® support a safe, clean environment that is sustainable for future generations. However, Realtors® oppose punitive environmental regulations that serve to increase housing costs unnecessarily. Realtors® will work with government and the community to support voluntary, common-sense programs that will promote a healthy, sustainable environment. (F,S,L)

#### **Promote Quality Education**

Every child in our community deserves a quality education. Realtors® often work with clients whose priority is to locate a school that meets the needs of their families. Realtors® will continue to promote choice, accountability and accessibility to all levels of education. (F,S,L)

#### **Prioritize Transportation**

The Charlotte region continues to be a donor county when it comes to tax dollars collected to fund state road construction and maintenance. The association joins other Charlotte-area organizations to support maintaining the integrity of the Highway Trust Fund, equitable funding for new roads and maintenance and improvement of existing roads in the Charlotte region. (S,L)



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### **Provide Choices in Transportation**

In a growing community, it is important that we support municipal and state governments as they meet the transportation needs of our community. Realtors® support continuing to build and maintain our broad network of roads, while supporting transit and mass-transportation options. (S,L)

### **Oppose Vehicle Miles Travel Tax**

Realtors® duties are not encompassed by a typical nine-to-five job. Realtors® rely on their personal vehicles and a reliable transportation network to do their jobs. Association members oppose any taxes that would inordinately affect their business model. (F,S,L)

### **Support Arts in Community**

A thriving cultural community is as important to residents and future homebuyers as schools and infrastructure. The association supports arts-and-cultural funding through contributions to the Arts and Science Council. The association will continue to support culture through neighborhood and community-based projects involving arts, science, history and heritage. (S,L)

### **Promote Community Safety**

Safe neighborhoods and low crime rates are of critical concern to Realtors® as they work with clients in the home-buying and home-selling process. Realtors® support initiatives that help protect all of our citizens while not placing any disproportionate financial or burden on any one community or class of structure. Realtors® support voluntary community safety initiatives. (S,L)

### **Advocate for Affordable Health Care**

Access to affordable health insurance has increasingly become an issue for Realtors®. A broad coalition of trade organizations, including the National Association of Realtors®, support legislation that would allow small businesses to join together through their trade associations to form small-business health plans. (F,S)

In parentheses are government jurisdiction keys. F – Federal, S – State, and L – Local.