

Ohio Association of REALTORS®

Ohio's REALTORS have a long-standing tradition of fighting for private property rights and the free enterprise system at the state and local level.

As a leading grassroots organization, we have invoked the power of our people – members who live and work in every community across this great state – to help our fellow Buckeyes achieve home ownership. Our entrepreneurial spirit helps countless businesses open their doors and grow. We have been the voice for real estate for more than a century – and have been a partner in pursuing policies that help move our communities and our state forward.

Our highly respected and influential REALTORS Political Action Committee has been an effective tool in helping elect lawmakers who are receptive to our concerns RPAC has been – and will always be -- a key part of our ongoing fight to preserve private property rights. It allows us to directly support candidates empathetic to our views.

But today – due in large measure to the Supreme Court's Citizen United ruling a few years ago – a new era of politics has dawned. For Ohio's REALTORS to remain a strong, effective advocate – it's imperative that we reimagine and reinvigorate our approach to public policy.

As such, OAR recently approved the establishment of a ground-breaking initiative designed to help advance the real estate profession's shared objective of being the leading voice for Ohio real estate. At our recent Annual Convention & Expo, Directors adopted a \$25 member dues assessment for a five-year period to launch an Ohio Political Advocacy Fund, allowing us to expand our involvement at the State House and City Halls across the state. The money will be utilized by both OAR and our Local Boards/Associations to support political and issue advocacy campaigns. It will complement and enhance our existing RPAC program, creating a solid foundation for long-term relevance in ensuring that private property rights are protected.

Ohio ranks 7th nationally with nearly 3,800 units of local government. Given the importance of REALTOR participation in local elections and issues, providing additional resources is paramount to achieving a successful outcome. OAR's elected leadership and staff have continually advocated that political influence begins at the local level. This is evident in a multitude of ways, such as the many local taxing initiatives, home rule ballot initiatives, and restrictive or onerous ordinances that surface in local communities. Plus, today's local elected official will likely become a state representative or senator.

The Ohio Political Advocacy Fund is an important step in building a lasting partnership with our Local Boards/Associations.

Another key initiative being advocated by OAR is passage of a bill designed to update Ohio's licensing structure and modernize the delivery of pre-license real estate education.

The bill, backed by OAR, Ohio Division of Real Estate, Ohio Real Estate Commission and the Ohio Association of Community Colleges, was overwhelmingly approved by the Ohio House by a 91-6 margin. It will be considered by the Senate following the election.

If approved, Ohio will become the nation's 38th state that gives aspiring real estate licensees a choice in fulfilling the requirements via classroom or on-line. As currently drafted, the bill provides additional

oversight of pre-license real estate curriculum prior to it being offered by an Institution of Higher Education. It requires that the courses are eligible for academic credit and may be applied toward a degree, thereby closing a loophole in current Ohio law that doesn't require credit eligibility of pre-licensure real estate education courses.

Ohio's REALTOR community was instrumental in securing passage in the Ohio House, as the profession responded to a Call-for-Action and conveyed our positive message to their respective lawmaker.