



## ***2009 Legislative Priorities***

**Since 1932, the Oregon Association of REALTORS® has been more than the voice of real estate.** As one of Oregon's largest trade associations — **with more than 16,500 members** — we provide the resources, education, advocacy and legal tools that allow REALTORS® to practice ethically.

But for REALTORS® the job doesn't end there. We strive to protect the private property rights of all Oregonians and to help ensure every citizen the opportunity for homeownership. To preserve Oregon's unique quality of life requires a vibrant real estate market. In 2007, 62,850 Oregon home sales generated \$40.5 billion in economic activity. The path to strengthening our state's economy means protecting and investing in housing.

### **HOME TAXES**

**Any new taxes on real estate would be a major burden on buyers and sellers.** Taxes have a substantial impact on home affordability, and would further slow economic development. To help Oregonians achieve the dream of homeownership, we do not need deterrents that would only further depress the housing market and increase unemployment.

▶ **YES on HB 2481** by Rep. Holvey (D-Eugene) to prohibit new private taxes or fees on the sale of real estate.

▶ **NO on HB 2473** by the House Committee on Revenue to prohibit efforts to create local real estate transfer taxes.

▶ **NO on SB 396** by the Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue to stop additional layers of local taxes on real estate.

### **REAL ESTATE LICENSING**

**It is vital that we support the ongoing efforts of Oregon REALTORS® to improve and enhance professionalism in the real estate industry.** By strengthening the continuing education of real estate licensees, all Oregonians will benefit from increased professionalism and additional levels of consumer protection. Increasing the experience and testing required for brokers to obtain "principal broker" status will help ensure that real estate activity is conducted with the highest expertise.

▶ **YES on SB 640** by Sen. Courtney (D-Salem) to improve real estate industry education requirements.

▶ **YES on HB 2910** by Rep. Schaufler (D-Happy Valley) to strengthen consumer protection and ensure all professional real estate activity may continue during temporary absences and unforeseen circumstances.

## LAND USE

Oregon REALTORS® support land use policies that are flexible, foster economic development and promote housing affordability.

**One size does not fit all** - There must be increased flexibility in land use that takes regional differences into account and allows for greater local determination.

**Standing** - There must be clear parameters for who has standing to appeal land use decisions.

**Proper Identification of Resource Lands** - Current technology allows for a more accurate determination of what truly constitutes “high value” farm land. The soil classification system has resulted in farm land with little growing potential remaining off limits to development.

**Economic Development** - While the land use system was designed to protect farm and forest land, the value of additional economic development must be recognized.

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

**Many hardworking Oregonians are faced with a harsh reality — homeownership is increasingly out of reach.** Recent housing statistics show that Oregon has four of the 30 least affordable metropolitan areas in the United States. With today’s challenging economic times and soaring unemployment rates, stabilizing our state’s housing market is an essential part of the solution. To help more Oregonians achieve the dream of homeownership, we need to ensure that there are available homes at every price level.

▶ **YES on HB 2436** by Rep. Schaufler (D-Happy Valley) to create a stable, dedicated revenue source for affordable housing.

## HEALTH CARE ACCESS

**The lack of affordable health care is a major challenge facing thousands of Oregon families** — including a large number of Oregon REALTORS®. Because many REALTORS® are self-employed this impacts our industry far more than most others — as one in four REALTORS® does not have health insurance. The unaffordable cost of premiums in the group market make it virtually impossible for member associations such as OAR to offer health insurance. Since 2001, small group insurance premiums have increased a staggering 78%. Today, only 34% of realty firms are able to offer health insurance.

**Promote Attainable Health Care Coverage** - by reforming association group plan requirements to increase access to affordable health care, while preserving state regulation and oversight of insurers and health plans.

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