



Connecticut REALTORS®

2016-2017 Public Policy Statement

Views held by Connecticut REALTORS® on important real estate issues affecting our state.

Introduction

To acquaint you with the views held by REALTORS® on important issues affecting our state, we are pleased to present this *2016-2017 CTR Public Policy Statement*.

If you are a public official or candidate, it provides information that can be helpful as you formulate your own positions. If you are a REALTOR®, it will help guide you in evaluating where the candidates stand on topics important to our business.

Organized in 1920, the Connecticut Association of REALTORS®, Inc. (d/b/a "Connecticut REALTORS®" or "CTR") was formed to protect the rights of property ownership, to elevate the standards of real estate practice and to disseminate real estate information. CTR's public advocacy role serves a dual purpose: 1) to protect the interests of real estate owners and prospective homebuyers at the State Capitol and in Washington, DC; and 2) to improve the business climate for its nearly 16,500 members.

I. Housing

CTR supports measures which increase the supply and affordability of all types of housing.

CTR supports incentives to home ownership including tax credits and incentives such as “Learn Here, Live Here.”

CTR supports the efforts of the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CFHA) to use tax-exempt mortgage revenue bonds to provide below market rate mortgages for low and moderate income first time homebuyers; and efforts to provide down payment assistance to qualified home buyers.

CTR opposes policies that can penalize Connecticut for being a judicial foreclosure state.

CTR supports state and federal equal opportunity in housing initiatives.

CTR supports inclusion of grandfathering provisions with adoption or changes to building codes.

II. Zoning, Land Use & Smart Growth

CTR strongly opposes exclusionary zoning, no-growth ordinances and moratoria as such laws and policies limit the supply of housing, restrict economic and investment opportunities, and contribute to higher housing costs.

CTR supports incentives that increase the supply of workforce housing and assist home buyers and renters.

CTR supports legislation that encourages a town to implement a plan to develop workforce housing and supports the Affordable Housing Appeals Process.

CTR supports measures giving property owners protections from abusive eminent domain practices. We oppose use of eminent domain for economic development projects that do not have a public benefit that greatly outweighs private benefits or for accumulation to solely expand a tax base in a municipality. We support provisions that permit original owner buy-back except where federal funds provide otherwise. We support just compensation that exceeds the fair market value of the property and/or recognizes inequities of non-replaceable properties for a taking.

CTR supports relocation assistance for homes, farms and businesses when displaced by road projects.

CTR recognizes that the one-stop procedure for building permits is a cost-saving approach to housing improvements and development; and can provide opportunity to maintain neighboring property values. We support efforts to expand the one-stop procedure to reduce delays property owners and developers experience as well as reduce development costs.

CTR recognizes the need to develop a balanced transportation system that can effectively move people and products through Connecticut, while enhancing the economy and preserving a high quality of life. We believe our transportation system, provided by the state and in conjunction with local governments, should be funded by broad-based and reliable revenue sources.

III. Fiscal

CTR opposes any conveyance taxes on real property, whether on sellers or buyers.

CTR opposes taxes or fees placed on the public at the time of transfer of a property.

CTR encourages and supports fiscal limitations on spending and commensurate taxation at all levels of government. We oppose legislation and taxation that allow uncontrolled and unchecked government growth and spending.

CTR supports a system of taxation based upon a uniform assessment rate of present true and actual value for all properties as determined at time of revaluation. CTR opposes "land value taxation" in which "underutilized" land is assessed higher than structures.

CTR urges the General Assembly to achieve fiscal soundness while minimizing the tax burden on real property owners. Real Property owners continue to pay a disproportionate share of taxes.

CTR opposes use of a mileage tax to fund transportation or other needs.

IV. Real Estate Industry

CTR opposes mandatory energy audits or mandatory energy ratings for homes or commercial buildings.

CTR opposes mandatory sprinklers in new construction or existing single family homes.

CTR supports legislation that allows brokers and salespersons to charge a fee for free-standing broker price opinions (BPO) so long as the opinions are not called or construed as "appraisals".

CTR supports the availability and affordability of property casualty and flood insurance as it is critical to the well-being of homeownership efforts in Connecticut.

CTR supports the voluntary use of a Sellers Property Condition Disclosure Report form. CTR urges lawmakers to resist placing excessive provisions in the form that can be more properly answered in a home inspection report.

CTR supports measures to ensure residential and commercial brokers are paid for their work, such as the Broker's Lien Law.

CTR supports efforts to ensure Appraisal Management Companies use appraisers with market knowledge, to ensure proper valuations.

CTR supports a strong licensing law and a Real Estate Commission with power to enforce it. CTR has had a long track record working to protect the public from inferior or unlicensed practice in the conduct of the real estate business; and we believe there must be a level of competency and training commensurate with the public's expectations.

CTR supports pre-licensure requirements for real estate brokers which ensure knowledge and transactional experience prior to obtaining a license.

V. Environment

CTR supports a clean environment. Connecticut's natural resources preserve the "old New England" charm and scenic beauty that allows Connecticut to maintain its varied housing stock including its traditional colonial appearance and quality of life. Clean soil and safe water are elements that will assure continued growth and prosperity.

CTR supports reasonable and fair regulations that promote a balance between economic growth, protection of private property rights and preservation of the environment while opposing any initiatives that exceed evidence-based criteria for cost effectiveness.

CTR opposes unreasonable restriction on the use of privately owned property including but not limited to coastal and shoreland zone controls, open space requirements, public/private water supply regulations, moratoriums and no growth policies that have adverse economic effects on employment, housing and the tax base. The Association urges all levels of government to respect the concept that private property ownership is made up of a bundle of rights, which includes use. If such a use is denied or abridged by government for the benefit of the people, the cost of "taking" should be equitably distributed. The individual property owner should not be expected to pay for measures that benefit the public good and a broad number of citizens and which, in effect, limit the individual's private property rights.

CTR opposes regulations that do not demonstrate best science, such as mandatory radon testing and certain wetlands buffers.

CTR opposes government-imposed mandates forcing buyers and sellers to do testing or inspections at the time of transfer of property, including radon, a variety of well water tests and mandatory lead inspections.

CTR opposes unreasonable restrictions on the property owner's right to perform his/her own lead abatement work or arrange for a contractor of his choice. CTR supports legislation encouraging economical "encapsulation" technology. We urge the Department of Public Health to broadly disseminate information to the public on products available.

Approved by the CAR Board of Directors September 16, 2015