2027 Statement of Policy on
Current Positions of Illinois REALTORS®

PREAMBLE – General Statement of Policy

We, the members of the Illinois REALTORS® Board of Directors, representing a membership of nearly 50,000 members, renew our dedication to the ideals expressed in the REALTORS® Code of Ethics.

Illinois REALTORS® is dedicated to the protection and the preservation of the free enterprise system and the right of the individual to own real property as guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States of America.

We reaffirm our faith in our profession and faith in the future of America. We offer to the public in general and government in particular the benefits of our knowledge of real estate, our experience and our technical resources in protecting the free enterprise system and private property rights.

HOUSING – General Statement of Policy

As an association, we reaffirm our commitment to the goal of housing and a suitable living environment for every family, which includes every generation. We recognize that there are a number of housing issues that are of particular importance to aging Americans and their families. As this segment of the population grows, we believe senior housing solutions should be a priority of the real estate industry and state and local governments in Illinois. We believe that this objective can best be served by a healthy housing market accomplished in an economic environment that fosters an ample supply of affordable housing.

We pledge our support to work together in establishing policies and programs which promote an adequate supply of affordable owner-occupied and rental senior housing. We believe policies should prioritize the reduction of regulatory and other barriers that may prevent seniors from being able to safely and affordably age in place or affordably transition to an alternative housing option.

We reaffirm our belief that the pursuit of the goal of housing for every family, from the homeless to the homeowner, should be raised to the highest level of state priorities.

While we strongly believe that a healthy housing climate is predicated on a freely competitive, private-sector based housing industry, we believe that the government can and should play an important role in the housing arena. With the shift of responsibility for housing programs away from the federal government, it is critical for state government to provide leadership in promoting housing availability and affordability.

We strongly believe that the real estate industry and the state and local governments in Illinois can all work together in establishing policies and programs which promote an adequate supply of affordable owner-occupied and rental housing and reduce regulatory and other barriers to housing availability and affordability.

We urge the Governor and the General Assembly to adopt, implement and provide a continual review of a comprehensive Illinois housing policy and we pledge to provide our support and assistance in such a policy.

Specific Housing Policies

Owner-Tenant Relations:

Owners of rental property should provide safe housing for the needs of their rental occupants. Rental occupants must recognize and accept their legal responsibility to maintain and care for the property and safety of their fellow occupants.

We encourage and support legislation, as well as legal measures, to prevent owner-tenant laws and policies which are injurious to the basic rights of private property ownership. We believe that property owners should be afforded adequate legal recourse to enable them to promptly evict those persons who do not have a legal right to occupy the premises.

Rent Control:

Rent control negatively affects the housing inventory by hastening the deterioration and loss of existing housing while discouraging the construction of new housing. By lowering the value of rental property, rent control negatively impacts the community's tax base.

Rent control measures ultimately decrease the availability of affordable housing and infringe upon the right of Americans to own property free of unreasonable controls. We therefore oppose the adoption of rent control legislation at all levels of government.

Affordable Housing:

We reaffirm our commitment to continue to examine the level and types of efforts within the public and private sector that are being utilized or contemplated to respond to the housing needs of low and middle-income individuals and to assist in the pursuit of sound housing policies for the State of Illinois.

We support the availability of programs under the Illinois Housing Development Authority which make funds available to enable low and middle-income families to improve their own housing condition. We support, and pledge our assistance in, the development of future initiatives consistent with the need for housing and our free enterprise system.

We believe that programs to increase the affordability and availability of housing for all Americans are important to the continued growth and vitality of Illinois, and believe that the funding of such programs is a responsibility which should be borne by all taxpayers.

Real Estate Financing:

An essential element in providing all Americans with safe housing is the availability and affordability of mortgage financing. We support efforts in both the public and private sector to increase the continued availability and affordability of mortgage financing.

We believe that full disclosure, in advance, of all terms of financing is essential to ensuring that the interests of all parties to the transaction are protected.

We support and encourage the regulation and vigorous prosecution of unscrupulous practitioners that engage in "predatory" lending activities or mortgage fraud.

We support, and encourage an increase in, the investment of public pension fund monies in real estate and mortgage-backed securities. We support this investment as both a sound and reliable investment option and as a tool to provide for the continued growth and vitality of the state by providing an adequate supply of mortgage financing.

Condominiums:

Condominium and cooperative forms of housing ownership provide important, economically attractive housing options for consumers.

Legislation or policies regarding this form of home ownership should give full consideration to the rights and interests of condominium developers, unit owners, tenants, buyers, sellers and their agents.

We oppose legislation or policies which place an unnecessary restriction or limitation on the furtherance, enhancement or availability of this form of home- ownership.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/DIVERSITY – General Statement of Policy

We reaffirm our full support and advocacy of the practice of equal opportunity/diversity in housing and renew our dedication to fulfilling the requirements of the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 as amended and the Illinois Human Rights Act. We pledge ourselves to uphold the spirit as well as the letter of the law, through programs, activities and training designed to promote and further the right of equal opportunity in housing for all people.

We believe equal opportunity/diversity exists only where there is complete freedom of individual choice in housing and we oppose any attempt to interfere with this freedom of choice.

We pledge our continuing support of and cooperation with the Illinois Department of Human Rights in our mutual efforts to assure equal opportunity/diversity in housing for all.

Specific Equal Opportunity Policies

Solicitation and Marketing:

We support as a basic component of the free enterprise system the right of real estate agents to actively market real estate and actively offer their services to home buyers and sellers.

We oppose any federal, state or local proposals which would place unreasonable limitations on the free and open marketing of real property or the availability of real estate brokerage services.

We support as a basic component of the free enterprise system and, as a constitutionally guaranteed right, the advertising of property on the open market through the use of solicitation generally and through real estate "For Sale" signs specifically.

We oppose unreasonable restrictions on the use of "For Sale" signs.

LAND USE/ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES – General Statement of Policy

We strongly believe in the fundamental right of all private property owners to determine the highest and best use of their land with the least possible governmental interference. Every individual should have the right to acquire real property with confidence that the value of such property will not be unduly diminished or jeopardized by governmental action without just compensation.

We recognize the importance of achieving and maintaining a healthy and clean environment and believe this can be accomplished by promoting a reasonable balance between environmental and economic concerns with the continued availability of affordable housing. We believe that the future growth of our state and nation, agricultural needs and social and economic factors should be considered in the development of land use policies.

Specific Land Use/Environmental Policies

Growth Management/Open Space:

We believe that growth should be encouraged as it stimulates the economy, increases the tax base and provides places to live and work. We also realize the responsibility to educate and work with local, state and federal government officials to develop responsible growth planning that is equitable and considers the needs of transportation, housing, agriculture, commercial, industrial and environmental concerns.

We oppose legislation and policies which unduly infringe upon an individual's right to own and use real property at its highest and best use.

We support the acquisition of land for open space and conservation areas by units of government through the purchase of the fee simple interest in such lands on the open market from willing sellers and are opposed to the acquisition of such land through the use of eminent domain powers.

We believe that funding for such acquisitions by local government entities should be subject to prior approval by voter referendum.

Land Use/Zoning:

We strongly believe that land use and zoning powers should remain in the hands of local government, and we oppose efforts to give the state or regional governmental entities additional powers over local land use and zoning issues.

We support the use of local zoning ordinances as a method of imposing reasonable guidelines for protecting the safety and well-being of the community with regard to the planning of housing.

We encourage local governments to solicit the public, and especially the real estate community, to provide input on zoning and planning matters prior to taking action on such matters.

We also encourage local governments to adopt land use and zoning policies that allow developers to meet consumer demands for a variety of residential, commercial, recreational and industrial uses while providing for open spaces and the protection of environmentally sensitive areas.

We support and encourage policies that promote redevelopment in urban areas, such as programs that encourage "in-fill" development and redevelopment of brownfield sites.

We oppose excessively restrictive or burdensome policies or proposals and oppose any ordinance, legislation or regulation which serves to deprive property owners of the value or use of their property without just compensation.

We believe that many current land use and zoning laws and policies serve as an impediment to innovative planning and development by developers, and we encourage cooperative efforts with state and local officials to remove such impediments.

Eminent Domain/Takings:

We strongly believe in the right of the individual to own real property without the fear of a government taking. We oppose the taking of private property without just compensation. We believe just compensation should include reimbursement for some portion of the expenses of the private property owner related to the taking. We oppose the widespread use of the power of eminent domain and encourage government policies and programs which encourage the acquisition of property by purchase on the open market rather than by condemnation. We oppose the taking of private property other than for public use except in extraordinary circumstances.

We generally oppose the use of "quick-take" condemnation as a means of acquiring property as this form of obtaining property is inherently unfair to the property owner. We do, however, recognize that extraordinary circumstances may, on rare occasion, necessitate the rapid acquisition of property by government. Legislation which authorizes rapid acquisition of property by government should be narrowly drawn to limit the timeframe and specify the purpose for the acquisition.

Hazardous Substances/Waste Disposal:

We pledge our assistance in developing a sound policy for addressing the presence of hazardous or harmful substances in real estate in a manner consistent with the economic well-being of our nation.

We pledge our assistance and offer our expertise and experience in real estate in developing sound policies in the State of Illinois to safely and economically dispose of and reduce the level of solid waste and hazardous waste while ensuring the continued growth and economic viability of our state.

We support state and federal programs and policies that promote the redevelopment of brownfield sites.

Foreign Ownership of U.S. Real Estate:

We support the right of foreign investors to freely acquire U.S. real property and the right of U.S. citizens to freely acquire property in foreign countries. We oppose laws and regulations that in any way curtail those rights. We also support the free flow of international finance for real estate acquisition.

We believe that foreign investors should be subject to the same rates of taxation as U.S. investors.

We recognize the need to collect appropriate data in order to monitor foreign real estate investment in this country.

Land Trusts:

We support the concept of land trusts as a legitimate method of holding title to real estate. We believe the judicial system presently has adequate jurisdiction concerning the disclosure of land trust information to protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Illinois.

Natural Disaster/Prevention and Mitigation:
We recognize the need to establish public and private programs, including insurance, to protect the health, safety and property of citizens to the fullest extent possible from natural disasters and other natural occurrences.

We pledge our assistance in developing programs and policies which will offer such protection while not depriving citizens of the right to own and use private property. We oppose policies or proposals which place the burden of such programs on a narrow segment of the population or which serve to unnecessarily infringe upon private property rights or deprive property owners of the ownership or use of their property.

TAXATION – General Statement of Policy

We support public policies and legislation which distribute the burden of paying for government operations and programs equitably among the general public.

We believe that the taxation of real estate is within the legitimate taxing authority of local governments, but believe that taxes upon real estate should be used to fund government services relating to real estate. We oppose policies or proposals which place a disproportionate burden of paying for government services on the property owner when paying for such services should be the responsibility of the general public.

We support accountability in government spending and taxation and support efforts and programs which increase the fiscal efficiency and accountability of government, including provisions requiring greater input by the public on spending and taxation matters and the use of sunsetting, capping, and continuing reevaluation of programs to eliminate unnecessary spending.

We support applying and enforcing retail sales taxes in a manner that does not penalize retailers with physical store locations in Illinois.

Specific Spending And Taxation Policies

Property Taxes:

The excessive taxation of real estate is detrimental to housing affordability and availability and has a negative impact on the overall growth and economic well-being of the State of Illinois.

We recognize that the property tax is a basic component of the financing of local government services. We also believe that in many cases, the taxation of real estate is used as a means of financing services, the cost of which should be borne by all taxpayers, not only property owners. We support efforts to and pledge our support in the development of proposals to more equitably distribute the burden of paying for government services.

We oppose state legislation or local ordinances seeking to authorize or enact a property tax increase without prior approval by the registered voters of the jurisdiction by referendum.

Real Estate Transfer Taxes:

Transfer taxes at the local level were originally enacted as a means of paying for government services related to transferring property, such as record keeping and recording.

The transfer tax has evolved into a means for home rule municipal governments to finance government services and programs which should be borne by the public in general, not just that portion of the populace buying or selling real property.

We believe transfer taxes are regressive, a detriment to housing affordability and an unreliable and inefficient revenue source for general government financing.

We oppose the imposition of transfer taxes by local governments, with the exception of the $.50 per $1,000 of the value of property transferred imposed by counties to pay for transfer related expenses. Transfer tax laws should never compel a property owner to comply with requirements other than the payment of the tax as a condition of transferring real property. We support the requirement that local governments obtain prior approval by voter referendum before imposing or increasing a real estate transfer tax.

We strongly oppose future increases in the state transfer tax.

Impact Fees and Mandatory Dedication of Land:

The development of real estate brings with it the economic benefits of providing jobs and expanding the tax base as well as providing places for people to live and work. We recognize that the development of real estate in many cases also necessitates improvements in certain infrastructure components. We encourage local governments to solicit the expertise of local real estate officials in formulating their development policies. We support appropriate notice, hearing and disclosure requirements for other forms of infrastructure financing such as Special Services Areas.

We recognize that the Road Improvement Impact Fee Law confers upon certain local governments the right to impose road improvement impact fees. We strongly support the standards and requirements set forth in the Road Improvement Impact Fee Law for the imposition of these fees. We oppose legislation that would reduce the standards established in the Road Improvement Impact Fee Law.

We are concerned about the trend toward the assessment of arbitrary fees and excessive fees on real estate as a means of generating general revenue for local government. We support a state law to institute consistent and clear guidelines that local government must follow prior to the assessment of impact or development fees.

Specifically, we support:

Public hearings to ensure that the real estate industry can provide their expertise in the formulation of local ordinances for development policies and resulting fee schedules.

A requirement that a needs assessment be developed by the municipality, county or the affected school or park district.

That the fees or land/construction requirements that are imposed on developers be part of an ordinance which also includes a defined and established level of service and an established schedule of fees.

A requirement that the impact fee cannot exceed a developer's proportionate share of the community's need for a new public infrastructure or new school or park lands or space as established by the needs assessment.

BUSINESS PRACTICES, PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS, EDUCATION AND GOVERNMENT REGULATION – General Statement of Policy

We reaffirm our commitment to complying with both the letter and spirit of all state, local and federal laws regulating the real estate industry and pledge our support and assistance in the further development of policies and programs which ensure the continued integrity and viability of the real estate industry while offering adequate protection for the consumer.

We support government regulations which strike a balance between necessary regulations to protect the integrity of the industry and the health, safety and well-being of the public while ensuring that the concept of free enterprise without undue government intervention is maintained.

We support the creation of a strong base for continued economic development and the creation of jobs in the State of Illinois and the modification of governmental legislation and regulations to that end. We affirm the need for Illinois to develop an environment more conducive to retaining and attracting businesses to the State.

We support a viable and responsible education system based upon equitable and sustainable funding sources and the State of Illinois fulfilling its constitutional mandate.

In addition, we reaffirm our commitment to and belief in the REALTORS® Code of Ethics and the Standards of Practice contained therein.

We urge government officials at all levels to solicit the input and expertise of the real estate industry in formulating government regulatory policies.

Specific Business, Professional, and Regulatory Policies

Pre-License Education:

We support specific educational requirements as a prerequisite for licensing and support the continuation of training and education throughout the professional careers of all members of our Association to assure competent and skillful real estate service to the citizens of Illinois. We recognize our responsibility to the members of the Association to make available meaningful and advanced levels of training and education.

Continuing Education:

We support mandatory coursework immediately after initial licensure as a broker and mandatory continuing education as a condition of real estate license renewal.

Professionalism:

Professionalism in real estate is one of the primary objectives of the Association. We pledge to our members programs of the highest quality and availability to address the complex and sophisticated practice of real estate.

Local Association Training:

We will work to assist local associations in offering educational training programs to help members meet the challenges of real estate practice.

Professional Liability:

Recognizing the risk that our members face in today's marketplace the Association shall provide risk reduction education and training to our members. The Association strongly encourages its members to manage their risk through regular assessment, training and the purchase of errors and omissions, general commercial liability, auto and possibly cyber-crime insurance.

Real Estate Research:

We support continued research on all practical matters pertaining to real estate. We support a fund in the State Treasury for research purposes. We believe there is value in using license fees as one of the sources for research capabilities to develop practical studies, programs and articles for our members.

Government Regulation of the Real Estate Industry:

We urge the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation to vigorously enforce disciplinary action for substantive violations of the license law and rules; to vigorously prosecute those engaged in the real estate brokerage business without being properly licensed; to provide adequate and trained investigative and legal staff; to provide timely responses and disposition of complaints; to ensure the Real Estate Administration and Disciplinary Board's involvement in the complaint and learning process; and to exercise diligence and due process at all levels of the investigatory and regulatory process.

Illinois REALTORS® is comprised of real estate professionals who provide services relating to every aspect of a real estate transaction, including services such as real estate brokerage, appraisal, title insurance, mortgage finance and others. We pledge to continue to protect and promote the ability of our members to provide such services and we oppose legislation to prohibit or limit the involvement of REALTORS® in all segments of the real estate transaction. We support federal laws and related state statutes which require that adequate information about the real estate transaction be provided to the consumer. We believe that a free market and consumer choice are in the best interest of the consumer and the industry and we oppose laws or policies which hinder the free market or consumer choice in real estate transactions.

We oppose any state or local proposals to shift the burden of and liability for making required disclosures regarding real property from the property owner to the owner's agent.

Involvement of Financial Entities in Real Estate:

We oppose granting the authority to financial entities which benefit from federal deposit insurance, favorable tax treatment and special access to credit (including through their parents, subsidiaries, branches, affiliates and divisions) to participate in the business of real estate brokerage, fee appraising, leasing, real estate development, real estate syndication, property management and other real estate services and/or activities not directly related to their primary function. Such activities may conflict with the interests of their customers, threaten the safety and financial stability of the institution, increase the risk of taxpayer liability and pose a threat to the competitive structure of the real estate industry.

POLITICAL AFFAIRS – General Statement of Policy

We strongly support the fundamental right of every citizen to participate in the governmental process by freely and openly expressing his or her ideas, views or opinions about matters facing government at all levels. We oppose any limits, restrictions or other infringements on the right of a person, whether as an individual or as a member of an organization, to use any and all legal methods in attempting to affect the decisions and the course of government. We believe this is necessary in order to have a representative and responsive government.

Specific Political Affairs Policies

Political Action Committees & Public Financing of Election Campaigns:

Any attempt to reduce the participation of voluntary political action committees undermines a basic political freedom and civic right. Candidates should be encouraged to seek support from many diverse sectors of the electorate to insure representation of the widest spectrum of viewpoints.

We oppose public financing as the single source of financing elections. Public financing, in whole or in part, will inevitably lead to the elimination of private contributions to elections. Such a system will reduce communication between elected officials and the people they serve.

Independent Expenditures:

We will utilize this tool as a means of expressing the REALTOR® voice in the political process to the extent that Independent Expenditures remain as a legal means of involvement in the political and issue campaigns.

MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

We strongly believe in and advocate the involvement of our members in the governmental process. We support and will continue to develop programs which will enhance the ability of our members to have a strong voice in local, state and federal government, including programs to assist REALTORS in dealing with issues affecting the real estate industry at the local level.

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

We believe that a healthy real estate market includes the following sectors: commercial, retail, office, industrial, global investment and multi-unit residential properties. We reaffirm our commitment to provide commercial members with: (1) an organizational voice to influence legislation – at the national, state and local levels – and liaison with other industry groups, and (2) opportunities for professional development.

Specific Commercial Real Estate Policies

Education:

We reaffirm our commitment to offer educational programs, seminars and courses to keep commercial members current on vital issues, better able to serve the public and meet the continuing education requirements of the Illinois Real Estate License Act. Such programs shall foster professional development through opportunities for networking, mentoring and professional connectivity. We will work with local associations, institutes, societies and affiliate groups in the development and offering of such coursework and programs.

Taxation and Business Development:

We believe that Illinois' fiscal policy and business tax laws should actively promote economic growth by supporting policies which induce business development throughout the State. To that end, we support the continuance of policies such as Illinois Enterprise Zones, tax increment finance and other tax policies which foster job creation.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® STATEMENT OF POLICY

Subject to the policy adopted herein, we do officially adopt and pledge our support of the Statement of Policy of the National Association of REALTORS®, as adopted by that Association.