

News Release

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®



REALTOR® ASSOCIATION OF PIONEER VALLEY, INC.

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Members of the Realtor® Association of Pioneer Valley visit Beacon Hill to Push for Land Use, Zoning Reforms and Mortgage Debt Relief



*Realtor® and Affiliate members of RAPV lobby state legislators
in support of homeownership in Massachusetts.*

Springfield, MA, June 15, 2015 – Twenty-six members from the Realtor® Association of Pioneer Valley (RAPV) traveled to Boston on June 10 to participate in the 30th annual “Realtor® Day on Beacon Hill” conducted by the Massachusetts Association of Realtors® (MAR). The Realtors® discussed key issues that impact consumers and the economy. The keynote address was provided by Senate President Stanley Rosenberg.

“Four-hundred Realtors® from across the state made the trip into Boston to meet with their legislators because they care deeply about homeownership issues and the economy,” said MAR President Corinne Fitzgerald, of Fitzgerald Real Estate in Greenfield. “Whether it’s to support the H.O.M.E. bill and its goal of producing more needed housing or helping distressed homeowners with the mortgage debt forgiveness bill, Realtors® understand first-hand the impact that legislation can have on their buyer and

seller clients.”

Realtor®-members from the Pioneer Valley met with Massachusetts State Senators and Representatives, and staff, of Carlos Gonzalez, Donald Humason, Michael Finn, Peter Kocot, Eric Lesser, Angelo Puppolo, Stanley Rosenberg, John Scibak, Todd Smola, Aaron Vega, John Velis, Joseph Wagner and James Welch to encourage them to support the proposed legislation: “An Act improving housing opportunities and the Massachusetts economy” (**Senate Bill S.119**) and “An Act relative to discharge of indebtedness of principal residence from gross income” as drafted (**Senate Bill S.1521**). There were four other legislative priorities also discussed.

Senate Bill S.119 would allow homeowners to complete loan modifications, short sales and foreclosures for which they have debt forgiven without making them liable to pay state taxes on the that debt. This bill would mirror the federal law, the Mortgage Debt Relief Act of 2007, to allow taxpayers to apply for this exclusion on their state tax return as well.

Senate Bill S.1521 or the “H.O.M. E. bill” would, in several ways, work to ease the short supply of housing in Massachusetts and the resultant potential homeowners facing increasing housing costs. One of the many issues driving the reduced housing stock is the presence of barriers to production, many of which are found in current zoning laws. This bill promotes smart growth by requiring that cluster development be allowed by right in residential zoning districts, at the density permitted in the underlying zoning district. This bill also promotes multifamily housing construction and accessory dwelling units, on “in-law apartments.”



RAPV members with Senator Donald Humason (center).

Realtors ® spoke with their legislators about SUPPORTING the following bills:

Senate Bill 202 and House Bill 226 “An Act regulating secondary metals dealing.” These bills seek to eliminate the theft of scrap metal from homes by establishing a licensing structure for the sale of scrap

metal. The licensing structure will provide law enforcement with ways to identify individuals who are selling the stolen metal to the scrap dealers. By giving the commonwealth access to, and the means for, the sharing of necessary information, the incentive to strip houses for metal will be greatly diminished.

Realtors ® also discussed why they **OPPOSE** the following topics:

House Bills 2618, 2621, 2700 (Brewster), 3299 (Provincetown) and Senate Bill 1614 - These bills that would impose a new home rental tax. These proposals promote the creation of a new tax on homeowners who choose to rent their homes for a short term. In addition to established businesses like hotels, motels and bed and breakfast establishments, these proposals would allow a city or town to levy a room occupancy tax on any apartment, single or multiple family housing, cottage, condominium or timeshare unit. Private homeowners or real estate agents would then be responsible for the collection, handling, and remittance of these taxes to the Department of Revenue.

House Bill 3300 “*An Act authorizing the town of Provincetown to impose a 0.5% real estate transfer fee.*” Transfer taxes authorize the creation of a new transfer tax on the sale of property in a city or town. Such taxes would create an entrance or exit fee to homeownership and would therefore have serious implications for the Massachusetts economy. These taxes single out home buyers and sellers and raise the bottom line price of many homes by thousands of dollars.

Senate Bill S.1761 “*An Act relative to home energy efficiency.*” Mandatory energy audits at or prior to the transfer of property can disrupt sales and therefore have a negative impact on the Massachusetts housing economy. Additionally, requiring energy efficiency scoring on homes in Massachusetts will stigmatize older homes causing a substantial decline in value.

(To find details on Realtor® positions, go to www.marealtor.com/content/government_affairs.htm)



RAPV members with Representative Michael Finn (sixth from the left).

RAPV members and staff who attended the event: Carol Albano, Brenda Binczewski, Kelly Bowman, Shawn Bowman, Kathy Calabrese, Sue Caron, Kim Crow, Peter Davies, Greg Dibrindisi, Michael Dombrowski, Patti-Ann Dombrowski, Sue Drumm, Corinne Fitzgerald, Shelley Gutowski, Dawn Henry, Sharyn Jones, Deb Jordan, Suzanne Moore, Patrick Nolan, Brian Risler, Russell Sabadosa, Richard Sawicki, Ben Scranton, Brian Sears, Kevin Sears, Clinton Stone, and Vincent Walsh,

About the Massachusetts Association of Realtors®: Organized in 1924, the Massachusetts Association of Realtors® is a professional trade organization with more than 20,000 members. The term REALTOR® is registered as the exclusive designation of members of the National Association of REALTORS® who subscribe to a strict code of ethics and enjoy continuing education programs.

About the REALTOR Association of Pioneer Valley: Organized in 1915, the Realtor® Association of Pioneer Valley (RAPV) is a professional trade organization with more than 1,600 members in the Pioneer Valley of western Massachusetts. RAPV is one of 1,200 local chapters of the National Association of Realtors®. RAPV covers 68 cities and towns in three counties

Editors: The term Realtor® is properly spelled with an initial capital "R", per the Associated Press Stylebook.

Mission:

To be the business and public policy advocate for REALTORS®.

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