



A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



Use the Power of Your Voice

By Deborah A Baisden, 2015 President

I have a question for you. Do you know the power of your voice? Take a moment and think about it. I'm referring to your advocacy voice. Your voice equals the power of your vote. Okay, you are thinking, that's one vote. But as a REALTOR®, your voice is part of a chorus that lets our state legislators know we are a powerful force - Virginia's largest professional association—more than 30,000 strong.

Over the past years your voice has protected access to the VHDA loan program for Virginia borrowers, defeated attempts to expand the ability of local governments to assess excessive fines for real estate signs accidentally placed in the right of way by REALTORS®, and protected the rights of homeowners to repair or rebuild damaged homes or structures when the locality has deemed them no longer "conforming".



Deborah A Baisden

Lend us your voice so we are clearly heard on February 11 —our annual REALTORS® Day on the Hill. This is our day. As REALTORS® we have the opportunity to sit down with our local legislators and let them know where VAR stands on bills that have an impact on our businesses and on our fellow Virginians, homeowners who value their property rights and their investments.

We have a day planned that will inform and entertain you. Highlights of the day include:

- Our legislative briefing, providing you with a greater understanding of the issues we hold important
- Capitol Square visits, where our presence is seen and heard by senators and delegates
- Lunch at the Omni Richmond Hotel with former congressman Tom Davis III speaking on ways to create a better, more effective government
- Our legislative reception at the Jefferson Hotel, where we will continue our conversations with policy makers and catch up with our colleagues

Stand strong with us! These are the most important issues we will be asking our legislators to support:

Protect REALTORS® - Make Violent Crime a Felony

REALTORS® who have been lured to a property or working alone have been victims of sexual assault, abduction and homicide. We are pursuing legislation to ensure authorities have adequate tools in place to prosecute individuals who

knowingly lure or trap REALTORS® into these circumstances with intent to do harm.

Further Clarification to the POA and COA

Each year, issues arise in the relationships of REALTORS®, homeowners, and Property and Condo Associations (POA's and COA's). VAR will work with the state legislature to make sure there is clarity in the law regarding what fees can be charged and what actions ownership associations can take. It is important to find the proper balance in the agreements between homeowners and POA's and COA's to ensure a mutually beneficial relationship.

Buyers Should Know if a Property Will Need Flood Insurance

It is important for potential buyers to gather all pertinent information before a purchase so they can make the best decision possible. This is especially true when it comes to the need for flood insurance. VAR feels the best place for buyers to get that information is early in the transaction and why we are suggesting the General Assembly adds flood certification to the "buyer-beware" disclaimer list.

Buyers Should Have Storm Water Maintenance Agreements

To ensure our buyers and buyers agents are aware of a storm water facility on a property, we propose amending the "buyer-beware" disclosure form to include the existence of storm water maintenance agreement.

Along with these pieces of legislation, VAR will track dozens of bills and policy issues of importance to our members during the General Assembly session.

What REALTORS® are advocating this legislative session will help shape the way our members can do business and protect the property rights of our customers and clients. Now, I have an ask. I ask that you, my fellow REALTORS®, join us on Wednesday, February 11, for REALTORS® Day on the Hill, so our strength in numbers and powerful voices will be seen and heard. Please register to attend via www.varealtor.com/GetActive.



Day on the Hill

Wednesday, February 11, 2015

www.varealtor.com/GetActive