



## Ohio House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee

Chairman Blessing:

On behalf of the Ohio REALTORS® (nearly 33,000 members), I thank you for this opportunity to provide our comments on House Bill 160. This legislation expands many of the Ohio Civil Rights Commission (OCRC) Law's existing prohibitions to apply to discriminatory practices on the basis of "sexual orientation," or "gender identity or expression." This legislation has been reviewed by our Legislative Steering Committee and our Board of Directors whom adopted the position to support the sections of House Bill 160 directed at fair housing practices.

The National Association of REALTORS® Code of Ethics, adopted in 1913, was one of the first codifications of ethical duties adopted by any business group. The Code ensures that consumers are served by requiring REALTORS® to cooperate with each other in furthering clients' best interests. Article 10 of the code states:

*“REALTORS® shall not deny equal professional services to any person for reasons of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity. REALTORS® shall not be parties to any plan or agreement to discriminate against a person or persons on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity.”*

*REALTORS®, in their real estate employment practices, shall not discriminate against any person or persons on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity.”*

House Bill 160 is consistent with the everyday practices of Ohio's REALTORS® and our membership supports the passage of this legislation. One of the tenets of our Code is that REALTORS® “identify and take steps, through enforcement of this Code of Ethics and by assisting appropriate regulatory bodies, to eliminate practices which may damage the public or which might discredit or bring dishonor to the real estate profession.” It is with this statement in mind that we respectfully ask for your support of House Bill 160

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to bring our view forward and share with you the reasons we support the passage of House Bill 160. If you or the members of the committee have any questions or would like to discuss further our position on this legislation please do not hesitate to contact me.

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