

Testimony in Support of Quality Real Estate Education
HB 238 – Reps. Fowler Arthur and Klopfenstein
Ohio House State and Local Government Committee
Marilyn John, Chair
Adam Ashba, President
Ashmont Realty

Chairwoman John, Vice-Chair Dean, Ranking Member Brennan and members of the House State and Local Government Committee:

My name is Adam Ashba and I am the president of Ashmont Realty. By way of background, I became a licensed salesperson in the great state of Ohio back in 2012. I am an instructor and I'm a broker, so I see first-hand how important the education is in the classroom and also how prepared agents are when they join my brokerage.

I am here today to testify in support of quality education in the real estate industry. I understand this committee is looking to reduce barriers to occupational licensing, but I have not witnessed that any barriers exist in the real estate industry. When I first started my career in 2012 we had almost 1800 licensed real estate agents here in the Central Ohio area. After Ohio allowed online real estate classes, we have seen an explosion of students which, as of last year, increased to nearly 11,000 real estate professionals in Columbus. This is over a 600% increase. My students literally can spend 3 weeks and minimum tuition cost, take their exam, sign up with an online broker and never leave their home.

I am concerned that standards are being diluted. Business owners such as myself have come to rely on quality sales agents entering my brokerage, but without quality standards, the responsibility will shift to Brokers to invest more time and money in preparing salespersons to be successful in the industry.

Quality standards included in accreditation for real estate schools are crucial because they provide the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate the complex and ever-changing real estate market and they hold schools accountable. Agents with high school degrees need to understand legal regulations, contracts, market research and appraisals, ethical standards, and industry best practices. In my experience, students are the most successful when they engage in classroom or live, online learning like Zoom. It appears that Ohio is encouraging more students to sign up and pay for what I call "pop-up" schools who record some classes and sell them over and over again. I would expect that there would be a decline in the preparedness of agents in the future. If you decide to reduce quality education in Ohio, we should expect less consumers to complete the education, less students to pass the state exam if they do complete the education and less agents to be successful in the real estate industry.

My license holds value and as you contemplate the reduction of the quality of education, it impacts all current license holders in this great state.

Please support quality educators and quality education for those entering the real estate industry in Ohio. The recommendations I've seen in the report that was passed by this committee will undoubtedly have unintended negative consequences for students, educators, brokers, regulators and most important Ohio homebuyers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to answer any questions.