

First-Time Homebuyers Savings Accounts Passes Senate

Senate Bill 309 (Mensch, R-Montgomery), which would create a First-Time Homebuyer Savings Account program in Pennsylvania, unanimously passed the Senate on Feb. 5. This legislation would allow first-time homebuyers to deposit money into a savings account, where it goes for the exclusive purpose of purchasing a first home, and the money can be deducted from their state income tax. SB 309 will now move to the House of Representatives for consideration.

Rep. Rosemary Brown (R-Monroe) has also introduced companion legislation that was approved by the House of Representative last year and is awaiting consideration in the Senate Urban Affairs Committee.

To learn more about First-Time Homebuyers Savings Accounts, visit FirstHomePA.com.

Private Roadway Maintenance Agreement Bill Passes House

House Bill 523 (Day, R-Lehigh) passed the PA House of Representatives last month. This legislation would amend the Private Road Act to require homeowners who access their properties through a private roadway to contribute to the maintenance of that road.

The legislation is necessary because new banking regulations would prevent homeowners who access their houses through a private road from obtaining certain loans because they lacked a written agreement for the maintenance of the private road. PAR has worked closely with Day to advance this legislation and supports its enactment. HB 523 will now move to the Senate for consideration.

Senate Committee Holds Property Tax Reform Workshop

PAR CEO Mike McGee spoke on behalf of the association during a Senate Majority Policy Committee workshop near Harrisburg this week. McGee stressed PAR's commitment to real property tax reform, protecting property rights and homeownership in the commonwealth. He also noted that in PAR's most recent Welcome Home study, which surveys new homebuyers in Pennsylvania, 8% reported that finding a home with a more affordable property tax bill was one of the biggest reasons they decided to buy a new home, while 56% had other reasons, but paid close attention to the property taxes on a new home. McGee was joined by several legislators and representatives of other organizations interested in property tax reform.

More than 50 people were in attendance and many took the opportunity to voice their concerns about burdensome property taxes and their inability to afford the increasing tax.

PAR Board of Directors Approves Request to State Real Estate Commission and New Policy Statement

The PAR board of directors approved two government affairs actions during the Winter Business Meetings in January. First, the board voted to encourage the State Real Estate Commission to make fair housing the mandatory topic for the 2020-2022 continuing education cycle, in light of the [New York Newsday](#) fair housing investigation.

The board also approved a new policy statement on short-term rentals. The policy is a result of the Short-Term Rentals Task Force, which met to address the ongoing issues of short-term rentals and issues arising from municipalities enacting short-term rental regulations. PAR's policy statement reflects the task force's research of several market-impact studies, other states' approaches to STR regulations, court opinions on STRs and NAR's and the federal government's policies on STRs.

Housing Affordability Is Topic of Discussion at NAR's Second Annual Policy Forum

NAR is highlighting housing affordability as a top advocacy priority in 2020. The Policy Forum brought together some of the brightest economists, lawmakers and other industry stakeholders to lead discussions that will generate solutions to the affordable housing problem. Read more about the forum and access the recording. As a follow-up, NAR released a statement of notable quotes from key guests.