

Pennsylvania Association of Realtors® - October 2024 Capitol Report

Key Legislative Priority Signed Into Law

Amendments to the Municipal Code and Ordinance Compliance Act were signed into law as Act 93 of 2024 on Oct. 2.

The Pennsylvania Association of Realtors® strongly advocated for these amendments which address multifamily property transfers involving tenant-occupied units as well as clarifying that municipal authorities also must abide by the requirements of MCOCA.

Originally House Bill 1567 (Malagari, D-Montgomery), this legislation amends MCOCA to make clear that municipalities have the power to issue a temporary use certificate even for multi-family properties where tenants are currently in place.

Over the past several years, PAR has learned of instances where municipalities have interpreted MCOCA to only allow municipalities to issue temporary access certificates in cases of these types of property transfers. This key legislation makes clear that temporary use certificates may be issued, provided that major health and safety violations are not present at the property.

One of two key priorities of the PAR Legislative Committee this session, Act 93 is a commonsense approach to ensure that property transfers are not arbitrarily stopped due to minor code violations, and it ensures that buyers and sellers have the ability to negotiate code violation repairs as part of the property transfer.

Act 93 goes into effect in 60 days. To read more about MCOCA, visit the PAR website.

First-Time Homebuyers Savings Account Advances in Pennsylvania Senate

Legislation creating first-time homebuyers savings accounts cleared another legislative hurdle last week.

House Bill 126, sponsored by Realtor® Champion Ryan Bizzarro (D-Erie), passed out of the Senate Urban Affairs Committee on Oct. 1 and now awaits final consideration by the Pennsylvania Senate. The legislation previously passed the full House of Representatives at the end of June.

HB 126 creates a program under the Pennsylvania Treasury that allows individuals to open and contribute to a savings account to pay for the down payment or allowable closing costs. Each account would name a qualified beneficiary, which must be a first-time homebuyer.

Monies deposited into the account would be eligible to be deducted from state income tax, up to \$5,000 (individual filer) or \$10,000 (joint filers) annually. Account holders would be able to claim the deductions annually for no more than 10 years (\$50,000/\$100,000 maximum).

The Pennsylvania Association of Realtors® has long supported this program and other initiatives aimed at providing assistance to first-time homebuyers.

HB 126 now awaits full consideration by the Senate. Please watch for more information in future Capitol Reports.

Pennsylvania Housing Action Plan

In September, Gov. Josh Shapiro signed an executive order directing his administration to create Pennsylvania's first comprehensive Housing Action Plan with the purpose of addressing the state's housing shortage and homelessness and expanding housing options. As part of the executive order, the Department of Community and Economic Development will be leading the plan's development and will work alongside stakeholders to ensure a coordinated, multi-agency approach involving state, local and federal partners, as well as private organizations.

The Housing Action Plan will be data-driven and incorporate recommendations including:

- Assessing and determining commonwealth-wide, regional and local housing needs
- Identifying goals with measurable outcomes, available resources and other items DCED believes may be necessary for achieving the goals outlined in the Housing Action Plan
- Identifying, reviewing and assessing the effectiveness of housing programs and resources offered by commonwealth agencies
- Providing recommendations for (a) state housing programs, investments and policymaking initiatives, and (b) leveraging best practices from the public and private sectors to improve housing outcomes across the commonwealth
- Recommending strategic planning initiatives that may be implemented over the next five years

This executive order also directs the Department of Human Services to recommend policies to address homelessness and support individuals in need in collaboration with stakeholders, including the Governor's Policy and Budget Offices, state agencies, local and federal government and community organizations.

This executive order aligns with the Governor's Ten-Year Strategic Plan for Economic Development, which identifies housing as a factor in increasing the commonwealth's economic competitiveness. To learn more about the governor's executive order and DCED's housing initiatives visit DCED's website.

PAR Campaign School

Considering a run for a local elected office? The Pennsylvania Realtor® Campaign School helps you prepare for a successful run for office and helps you gain a competitive edge over your opponents. These sessions are designed for interested candidates, campaign team staff and those interested in the democratic process of elections.

New this year will be several sessions designed to best prepare attendees for the ins and outs of ever-changing elections. These trainings will dive into issues impacting Realtors®, Realtor®-champions and their runs for local elected office. These 60-minute online trainings will be classroom-style to allow for open discussion.

Sessions begin at 10 a.m. and include:

- Nov. 13 - Should You Run for Local Office
- Nov. 20 - Building Your Name ID
- Dec. 4 - Managing/Volunteering for a Political Campaign
- Jan. 15 - Nomination Petitions
- Feb. 5 - Importance of Fundraising
- Feb. 19 - Building Support and Reducing Challenges
- March 5 - Get Out the Vote
- March 19 - Campaign Finance
- April 9 - Third Party Candidates

Registration is now open. If you have questions, please contact Chuck Liedike.

Advocacy Virtual Training

With fall and election season right around the corner, PAR's Advocacy team is hosting fall sessions of its Advocacy Virtual Training.

Oct. 23, 10 a.m. - RPAC Fundraising – Learn about the critical role RPAC plays in PAR's Advocacy efforts and how you can be an advocate and champion for RPAC.

Nov. 15, 10 a.m. - Elections Recap and Legislative Process - Learn the ins and outs of Pennsylvania's legislative process and receive a recap of the 2024 general election from PAR's Advocacy Managers Jeff Dempsey and Marcus Huertas.

Register now or learn more about Advocacy Virtual Training Sessions by visiting the Advocacy Virtual Training page on PAR's website.