



COMBAT ILLEGAL DISCRIMINATION IN COOPERATIVE HOUSING

S.1452 (Kavanagh) / A.4507 (Lavine) — "Fairness in Cooperative Homeownership Act"

Support

Co-op boards in New York have long operated with near-total discretion to reject buyers — and no obligation to explain why. This bill would require boards to use a standardized application, acknowledge receipt within a set timeframe, and notify applicants of a decision within 90 days. Boards that reject an applicant would need to provide a written reason.

The legislation directly targets a documented pattern where well-qualified buyers — disproportionately people of color — are quietly turned away with no recourse.

Why it matters: REALTORS® regularly work with buyers who are rejected by co-op boards for no stated reason. Standardizing the process protects buyers and creates a paper trail that deters discriminatory rejections. NYSAR has supported this bill for multiple sessions.



VACANCY RESET FOR LONG-TERM STABILIZED UNITS

S.6904 (Comrie) / A.7757 (Jackson)

Support

Under the 2019 Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act, landlords can no longer reset rents to market rate when a long-term tenant vacates a stabilized unit. This has left thousands of apartments sitting empty because owners cannot afford to renovate them at below-market rents. The bill would allow a rent reset on units vacated after 10+ years of continuous tenancy, provided the owner documents lead-free renovation and code-compliant modernization — with rents capped at Section 8 voucher levels for the area.

Why it matters: NYC alone has nearly 50,000 vacant but "unavailable" stabilized units, according to the Rent Guidelines Board. This bill would bring distressed units back to market in a responsible way, increasing housing supply without removing tenant protections from occupied apartments.

SOURCE OF INCOME DISCRIMINATION

State & Local Policy — Fair Housing Compliance

Monitor

New York law prohibits landlords and real estate professionals from refusing to rent to tenants solely because they use housing vouchers (e.g., Section 8) or other lawful sources of income. However, enforcement has been inconsistent. A recent appellate court ruling struck down a provision preventing landlords from rejecting Section 8 tenants, finding it raised Fourth Amendment concerns due to inspection requirements — leaving enforcement uncertain.

Why it matters: REALTORS® must ensure their practices — and those of their clients — comply with source of income protections where they apply. Fair housing violations carry serious professional and legal consequences. Members should be current on both state law and the status of local ordinances in the municipalities they serve.



REFORMING THE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS (SEQRA)

Governor Hochul's "Let Them Build" Agenda — 2026 State Budget

Support

New York's State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) requires environmental review for virtually any discretionary government action — including routine zoning approvals for housing. While well-intentioned, it has become a tool to delay or block needed housing, even for projects that virtually never generate significant environmental harm. Governor Hochul's budget proposal would exempt qualifying housing projects on previously disturbed land from redundant SEQRA review, while capping the review timeline at two years for projects that still require it.

NYSAR President Ron Garafalo formally endorsed the proposal, stating: SEQRA reform is essential to advancing affordable housing and the economic vitality New York urgently needs.

Why it matters: *Permitting delays add months or years to housing projects, driving up costs and suppressing supply. Reform would accelerate delivery of new homes, ease price pressure, and expand the inventory members need to serve their clients.*



ADDRESSING RISING HOME INSURANCE COSTS

State & Federal Policy — Ongoing

Monitor

Home insurance premiums have risen sharply across New York, particularly in coastal and flood-prone areas. Some insurers have exited markets or restricted new policies, leaving buyers unable to obtain coverage — which can kill deals at the closing table. The causes are complex: rising reinsurance costs, climate risk, inflation in construction costs, and regulatory limitations on rate adjustments. NAR has flagged insurance cost concerns as one of the top challenges buyers face nationally in 2026.

Why it matters: Insurance is increasingly a transaction-stopper, not just a line item. Members should be prepared to discuss insurance availability with clients early in the process, particularly for properties in high-risk areas, and to connect them with brokers who specialize in difficult-to-insure properties.

This problem is particularly acute in the Bronx, where all but a handful of insurers still offer liability and property coverage. The few carriers that remain charge premiums for Bronx multi-family property well more than the other boroughs, a housing market that can ill afford the high costs. This was highlighted during the Senate Insurance Committee public hearing earlier this year in which HGAR participated.



ZONING BOARD EDUCATION

State & Local Policy — Legislative & Administrative

Support

Zoning and planning boards make decisions that directly affect housing supply and affordability — but members are often volunteers with little formal training in land use law, fair housing, or housing economics. Poorly informed board decisions can block legitimate projects, expose municipalities to litigation, and slow housing production. NYSAR and local associations have supported initiatives requiring or expanding education and training for appointed board members.

Why it matters: *Better-educated zoning boards make more defensible decisions and are less susceptible to community pressure that disproportionately excludes certain housing types or buyers. For REALTORS®, it means fewer arbitrary denials and a more predictable development environment.*



WRITTEN BUYER REPRESENTATION AGREEMENTS

A.8910 / S.9564 — Codifying NAR Settlement Requirements in NY Law

Monitor

Following the NAR commission lawsuit settlement, NYSAR has already adopted written buyer representation agreements as a professional requirement. This legislation would codify those requirements into New York State law, making it mandatory for all licensees — not just NYSAR members — to execute a written buyer agreement before touring properties. The bill also prohibits residential listing agreements from exceeding two years and bans automatic renewal clauses.

Why it matters: *This legislation levels the playing field, ensuring non-member agents are held to the same standard. It also formalizes consumer protections that REALTORS® are already following — positioning NYSAR members as leaders in transparency rather than playing catch-up.*



OPPOSE THE REST ACT / ETPA EXPANSION

S.4659 (Kavanagh) / A.4877 (Shrestha) — Rent Emergency Stabilization for Tenants Act

Oppose

Current law allows municipalities outside NYC to adopt rent stabilization under the Emergency Tenant Protection Act (ETPA), but only after conducting a formal vacancy study showing a rate below 5%. The REST Act would eliminate that requirement, allowing localities to use loosely defined public data — rent burden, homelessness rates — to declare a housing emergency. It would also expand coverage to buildings constructed within the past 15 years and allow localities to lower the unit threshold below six.

NYSAR has formally opposed the bill, arguing it would spread rent control statewide without evidence-based justification, discouraging private investment in rental housing and reducing supply — the opposite of what New York needs.

Why it matters: Rent control reduces the incentive to maintain and invest in rental properties, suppresses new construction, and has historically worsened housing shortages over time. REALTORS® should be prepared to explain to clients and local officials why expanding rent stabilization without objective housing data standards is counterproductive to housing affordability.

