

The National Association of REALTORS®, “The Voice for Real Estate,” is America’s largest trade association, representing more than 1.2 million members involved in all aspects of the residential and commercial real estate industries.

**NAR President’s Podcast
Charles McMillan, 2009 President
June 16, 2009
To be recorded June 15, 2009**

Hello everyone, and welcome back to the NAR President’s Podcast. Thank you so much for tuning in.

We’ve heard from a lot of you recently on the subject of healthcare – specifically, what NAR is doing to provide more affordable health care options for REALTORS®.

As it turns out, things are just about to heat up on this issue, so it’s a good time for REALTORS® to get up to speed on the proposed solutions and what we can expect from Congress in the weeks and months ahead.

First, let me re-cap a little, so you understand how we got here...

As most of you know, for the past six years, NAR has pushed Congress to allow for a small business health options plan, small business health plans, and association health plans .

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Although we had a lot of support for legislation in these areas, we simply could not get Congress to close the deal. This year – thanks in part to a new Administration – Congress has shifted its focus to more comprehensive health care reform. In fact, the Senate has already introduced the first of two draft bills that will be considered, and we expect the House to do the same very soon.

According to top lawmakers, Congressional leaders are hoping to get a final bill to the President for signature no later than October 15th.

That’s an aggressive timeline, and it’s unclear how things will ultimately shake out. However, that’s not stopping NAR from turning up the heat on Congress NOW to make sure REALTORS® get what we need and that homeowners are not stuck paying for it.

In short, we are pushing hard on three key fronts...

First, and foremost, we are working directly with lawmakers who are crafting new legislation to ensure that

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comprehensive healthcare reform addresses the needs of the self-employed and small employers.

Second, we continue to urge lawmakers to re-introduce and sign onto several bills that provide solutions specifically for the self-employed and small employer, like the Small Business Health Options Plan Act and the CHOICE Act.

Although comprehensive reform is the top priority right now, the SHOP and CHOICE bills will serve as important benchmarks for what small business provisions should be considered in broader legislation. They also could turn out to be viable alternatives if broader legislation fails to pass both the House and the Senate.

Third, NAR will continue to oppose any effort to trim the mortgage interest deduction as a way to pay for healthcare reform. It is simply unfair to expect America’s homeowners to bear this burden. And, with signs that the housing market is stabilizing, now is certainly not the time to take away any incentives that will help get things moving again.

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Rest assured that NAR is doing everything we can to influence legislation, now, as it is being created. We continue to emphasize our position in meetings with lawmakers on Capitol Hill and with the Administration. We are also launching issue ads in Washington, D.C., that will urge Congress to remember the self-employed and small employers as they debate health reform. This ad campaign will reach beyond Washington DC when the time is right.

At the same time, we are stepping up our communications with you – our members – so you have all the information you need to educate your lawmakers on REALTOR® health care priorities. .

In fact, NAR recently created a new landing page on REALTOR.org, located at Realtor.org/healthreform, which includes details on the provisions we support, a timeline of legislative activity, background information, a general Q&A, and a glossary of terms that you may hear throughout the debate. We’ll be updating the page regularly, so please review the information and check back often.

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Additionally, we are encouraging you to submit questions about healthcare reform to the President’s Report mailbox. Just e-mail presidentsreport@realtor.org and include “healthcare” in the subject line.

At the end of each week, we will post an updated Q&A, based on what we are hearing from you. We also will tackle some of the most common questions on the Voices of Real Estate blog.

Of course, when legislation starts to move through Congress, we’ll need all of you to weigh in – either in favor of a bill that includes our provisions, or against a bill that would be bad for our members.

As always, the REALTOR® Action Center is your best way to connect with members of Congress. So, keep an eye out for e-mails asking you to send a letter to your Representatives or Senators, and respond quickly.

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With your help, I believe we can achieve affordable health care for REALTORS® this year, and take another big step toward an economic recovery, “United Toward Tomorrow.”

**That’s all for this edition of the NAR President’s Podcast.
Thanks, again, for tuning in.**

Check back on July 7th for my next podcast. And, don’t forget to visit the President’s Report page on REALTOR.org for the latest news and views from your entire 2009 Leadership Team.