



Senate Bill 680 – Real Estate Commission - Continuing Education Requirements – Alterations

Position: Support

Maryland REALTORS® supports Senate Bill 680, to update, clarify, and streamline the provision of required educational coursework for real estate licensees.

Many of Maryland’s statutes relating to real estate continuing education have not been updated in years or updated in a piecemeal way. This has resulted in course practices and content that are not in keeping with current industry standards or that have outlived their usefulness. SB 680 would address this by making the following changes:

- Increase Fair Housing Education Requirements: Maryland has added two new Fair Housing protected classes in recent years, yet instruction on Fair Housing has remained at 1.5 clock hours per renewal cycle. To accommodate instruction on these and all other protected classes, HB 972 would increase instruction time to 2 hours per cycle.
- Require Commercial Practitioners to Complete Education on ADA: There are currently two contradictory requirements for real estate licensees that deal exclusively in commercial transactions – one that exempts them from Fair Housing requirements, and another that allows them to substitute coursework on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance for Fair Housing. SB 680 resolves this by requiring commercial practitioners to complete ADA coursework in each renewal cycle.
- Combine Separate Brokerage Classes into a Single Course: In 2023, the General Assembly approved specific coursework for new real estate licensees to complete in their first renewal cycle. Included in those requirements was a course on brokerage relationships, which is also required for returning licensees. However, the Maryland Real Estate Commission (MREC) interpreted that statute as creating two separate brokerage classes, one for initial licensees and another for returning licensees. This was not the intent of the legislation, as brokerage laws are the same for all licensees. To reduce the possibility of licensees selecting the wrong brokerage class for their license category, this bill would clarify that brokerage instruction is the same for all license renewals.
- Create a Single Standard for Course Instructor Certification: MREC currently maintains two separate standards for course instructor certification. It is mentioned several times in regulation that the course provider is responsible for determining that instructors have the necessary skills and knowledge to teach each class according to the outline approved by MREC. However, for three specific classes, instructors are required to be personally certified by MREC through completion of a training course. MREC does not hold this training course on a regular basis, and it has resulted in instructor shortages and

difficulties scheduling these required classes. This bill would allow course providers to select instructors for all classes, while maintaining MREC oversight for course content.

- Removes Outdated References and Other Technical Corrections: Finally, this bill eliminates a required reference to “flipping” from ethics coursework, as flipping is a legal practice in the state. It also provides flexibility on charging of course approval fees by MREC.

Maryland REALTORS® asks for a favorable vote on SB 680.

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