

DC Federal Update from Jack Graecen

Congress was out of session this week. A coincidence that break fell after St. Pat's – I think not!

I'm kicking off this update with a gem for you to share with your members regarding Yelp and their reviews for OpenDoor and OfferPad. In some major markets, these brokerage platforms are grabbing up their fair share of the listings but with limited public feedback; enjoy and share accordingly.

Inman Article: <https://www.inman.com/2019/02/11/yelp-hides-reviews-pages-for-opendoor-offerpad/>

ATTENTION: As an added bonus this week, we've been asked to update everyone regarding **TWO** short surveys that will be going out sometime over the next week.

- The federal issues survey will go to a random selection of members next week focusing on infrastructure, affordable housing, and technology.
- This is a follow up to the survey we sent in October/November and just does a bit of a deeper dive on those three issues.
- Next, a flash survey (usually only open 24-48 hours) will go out to a random selection of members on flood insurance.
- It will only have 2-3 questions to gauge the temperature on the new proposal for flood risk ratings.

If you receive questions from members - or have questions yourself - please don't hesitate to reach out.

Finally, starting early next month we'll have two new Political Directors joining our ranks. At that time we'll be taking a look at the national map and reallocating states. Once the new state assignments have been decided we'll provide an update to everyone on who your new point of contact will be moving forward. For those lucky enough to be stuck with me, sorry! For everyone else, I'll always be here to help.

As always, the latest and greatest from D.C. is below for your reading pleasure.

NAR Testifies on Flood Insurance

On March 13, 2019, NAR testified before the House Financial Services Committee on draft legislation to reauthorize and reform the National Flood Insurance Program. The testimony:

- Supports a long-term reauthorization and also underscores the urgent need for reform;
- Supports many of the mapping and mitigation reform provisions in the draft legislation; and
- Urges Committee members to work together and build on these provisions including to open the door to a more robust private market for flood insurance.

Read [NAR's testimony\(link is external\)](#) and [press release](#)
Watch the [hearing and/or review the legislation](#)

Protections based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Legislation was introduced on Wednesday, March 13, 2019, to amend the Fair Housing Act to include protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The provisions are included as part of H.R. 5, or the Equality Act, which was sponsored by Congressman David Cicillini (D-RI). NAR wrote a [letter\(link is external\)](#) commending the Congressman and supporting the legislation.

[Download NAR's Letter](#)

NAR Launches new Safety Initiative:

The National Association of REALTORS® is committed to the safety of our members. Through the REALTOR® Safety Network, NAR will deploy REALTOR® Safety Alerts via social media when a physical or cyberthreat to REALTORS® warrants national attention. For example:

- A pattern of assaults against REALTORS® has been reported.
- A REALTOR® or the immediate family member of a REALTOR® goes missing.
- NAR learns that the association name or the names of its programs are being used fraudulently to attempt to collect money or information from REALTORS® or others.

For incidents that don't meet the criteria for a national alert, the REALTOR® Safety Team will ensure the local association is informed.

You can learn more about this new program at: www.NAR.realtor/Safety/Network.

NAR Hosts Housing Industry Meeting

On Friday, March 8, NAR's President, John Smaby, NAR's CEO, Bob Goldberg, and other NAR senior staff met with leaders of the National Association of Homebuilders, the Mortgage Bankers Association, and the American Bankers Association to discuss hot button housing policy issues. The group shared its efforts to promote homeownership and discussed ways our associations can work together to advance improvements to housing finance and tax laws in our country. Important issues include GSE reform, National Flood Insurance Program reauthorization, data security improvements, investment in infrastructure and tax incentives for homeownership. The group plans to meet quarterly to collaborate on our collective issues.

NAR Hosts FBI for Industry Wire Fraud Meeting

On Tuesday March 12, 2019, NAR hosted representatives of the American Bankers Association, American Land Title Association, Mortgage Bankers Association, RESPRO, and the American Escrow Agents Association together with the FBI to discuss wire fraud in the real estate industry. While the industry continues to educate their members on practices to combat wire fraud, this group is working on common messaging to raise awareness with consumers.

FHA Eliminates Inspector Roster

On March 12, 2019, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) officially eliminated the FHA Inspector Roster. In lieu of specific FHA requirements for home inspectors, FHA lenders will be able to use an inspector that has been certified by the International Code Council (ICC), such as certified Combination Inspectors (CIs) or Residential Combination Inspectors (RCIs). For areas with an insufficient supply of ICC certified inspectors, FHA will allow lenders to use a third party who is a registered architect, a professional engineer, or a trades person or contractor with a minimum of 5 years' experience and has met the licensing and bonding requirements of the state in which the property is located.

[Mortgagee Letter on FHA Inspector Roster](#)