



**Sara Lipnitz, 2018 President**

## MICHIGAN REALTORS®

As 2018 President of the Michigan Realtors®, I am presented with unique opportunities to engage with my fellow Realtors® across the state and nationwide. Whether it is attending annual NAR meetings, working with member leadership at the state level, or volunteering on a committee at the local level, I am humbled by the ability to connect with Realtors® who are motivated to be the best they can be in all capacities of their professional career. It is truly inspiring to witness!

In carrying that same motivation and drive forward this year, I have challenged my fellow colleagues to “Go the Distance” in 2018. This goal-setting mantra can be applied by:

- Going above and beyond the expectations of your clients, your team, your family, and your community;
- Going above and beyond your knowledge base by discovering and implementing today’s trends in real estate and using the tools that are available to make you more efficient and productive, and
- By asking yourself one very key question: What will YOU bring to the real estate industry that will separate you from the competition?

While this theme can be implemented individually, it is also versatile enough to be applied to groups, committees, and associations working towards a common goal. I am pleased to report that Michigan Realtors® is “Going the Distance” by working together to provide exceptional value in all aspects within the association.

### ***Celebrating Fair Housing***

April 2018 marked the 50th Anniversary of the 1968 landmark Fair Housing Act. In cooperation with the Michigan Realtors®, legislative resolutions were introduced in both chambers of the Michigan Legislature to commemorate the anniversary, and to recognize the role Realtors® play in advancing fair housing. This includes leading efforts to promote education and training, along with community outreach. In addition, Michigan Realtors® will continue to celebrate the significance of this milestone as we carry it forward in our daily efforts to provide equal housing opportunity to every customer and client.

### ***Fostering Leadership***

In support of its advocacy efforts and the need for engaged volunteer leadership, Michigan Realtors® continues to foster leadership within its own ranks. Entering its third year, the ***Michigan Realtors® Leadership Academy*** has established its reputation as a prime platform for emerging leaders in our industry. This year-long program promotes leaders who have demonstrated their potential through job-related and community activities. In addition, the Academy provides access to a network of industry experts across the state, all of whom are actively involved in improving our Association and industry.

### ***Continuing Education***

The ***CE Marketplace***, our one-stop shop for Continuing Education for licensees, is thriving, and continues to see a steady rise in enrollment. We have an effective working relationship with the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) and are fully embracing opportunities to take the lead as an organization that values education and professional development. We continue to “Go the Distance” by working towards enhancing CE legal content along with innovative models for distribution. For our membership and the Michigan consumer, we remain focused on education and accountability.

In legislative news, Michigan Realtors® Public Policy staff and volunteer leadership have undertaken critical issues on behalf of our industry, and Michigan’s property owners:

### ***Protection of Vacation Rentals***

There have been many initiatives put forth by local governments to ban the practice of vacation rentals through zoning. While we respect a local government’s right to reasonably regulate vacation rentals through uniformly applied approaches, we believe the availability of these types of rental arrangements offers a unique benefit and draw for Michigan property owners and communities. We also believe that an owner’s ability to maximize the value of their property through short-term rental is an important property right to protect. Legislation has been introduced in both the Michigan House and Michigan Senate (House

Bill 4503 and Senate Bill 329) to end the practice of banning short term rentals. We continue to work on these bills to protect property rights and preserve our Michigan traditions.

### ***First-Time Homebuyers Savings Account***

Efforts are underway in establishing Michigan First-Time Homebuyer Savings Accounts to provide a tax incentivized opportunity to deduct contributions and grow funds tax-free for homeownership *in* Michigan. These bills, Senate Bills 511 & 512, have already passed overwhelmingly in the Michigan Senate and await a vote in the House Tax Policy Committee. The implementation of these Savings Accounts is aimed at three things:

1. To promote homeownership rooted in Michigan;
2. To encourage retention of talent in Michigan through long-term savings for instant equity;
3. To better educate and prepare prospective homebuyers for the homebuying process.

From the Realtors® perspective, this legislation is truly reflective of “Going the Distance” – it promotes long-term awareness and smart planning for our clients. As ambassadors for this exciting proposal, we can promote a great new tool for investment in our state. The collaboration between our association and the Michigan Legislature will not only assist our future homebuyers, but retain talented Michiganders who want to keep their roots in Michigan.

### ***Transfer Tax Relief***

In the last legislative session, Michigan Realtors® successfully advocated for important tax relief legislation clarifying that the State Real Estate Transfer Tax Act Exemption (u) applies when the SEV at the time of sale is less than or equal to the original SEV. With its 4-year retroactive application, this legislation provided significant relief for many Michigan taxpayers that sold property in a declining market. This session, we’re making further clarifications to the exemption to make sure that it also applies to new construction and instances where the original SEV is tied to unimproved land. HB 4643 has passed out of the House and should receive quick consideration in the Michigan Senate.

### ***Statewide Septic Code***

For many years, Michigan Realtors® has been promoting a statewide septic code that seeks a uniform approach to the maintenance and management of the many onsite wastewater systems in Michigan. We currently exist as the last state without a statewide code. Instead, we operate under a patchwork of local approaches – some of which impose burdensome and ineffective “Point-of-Sale” requirements on real estate transactions. Michigan Realtors®

is once again working with many interested stakeholders on a uniform approach that efficiently protects our groundwater, while respecting property rights.

Michigan Realtors® continues to provide exceptional opportunities for members to grow, engage, and inspire. I am proud of the work that has been put forth by our industry leaders who share a passion for making Michigan an amazing place to live, work and play. Equipped with sound policy initiatives, outstanding volunteer members, and a multi-faceted association providing incomparable member services, I believe our 30,000 members are fully prepared to “Go the Distance” in 2018!