



March 9, 2015

### **2015 Legislative Session Begins**

With the start of the 2015 legislative session on March 3, the Bill Read Committee and your lobbying team have been busy sifting through over 370 legislative proposals to identify the bills affecting the real estate industry and property owners.

By law, the session consists of 30 days that must occur within a 105 calendar day period. Generally, the legislators convene on Tuesday and Thursday, reserving Wednesday for committee meetings. Leadership may schedule three-day work weeks at various times during the session. The session is expected to conclude in early June.

### **General Fund Budget Shortfall Dominates Headlines**

Governor Robert Bentley introduced his solution on February 27 and again at the State of the State address on March 3 to fix an estimated \$700 million shortfall in the General Fund Budget.

The Governor's plan includes eight options that will raise an estimated \$541 million in revenue and unearmarking another \$187 million to address the issue. [DETAILS](#)

### **AAR Eminent Domain Legislation Filed in Senate**

Senator Jimmy Holley (R-Elba) sponsored the REALTORS® eminent domain legislation, SB 83, that would prevent government entities from abusing their eminent domain powers to seize underwater mortgages or deeds of trust in a refinancing scheme that is occurring in other parts of the country. The National Association of REALTORS® spotted this trend in other parts of the country and this legislation is preemptive to stop it before it starts in Alabama. The Alabama Bankers Association has signed on in support of this legislation. Rep. Paul Lee (R-Dothan) will sponsor the companion legislation, HB 121, in the House.

### **AAR Right of Redemption Legislation Filed in Senate**

Senate Majority Leader Greg Reed (R-Jasper) sponsored the REALTORS® right of redemption legislation and garnered 15 other cosponsors to assist with the legislation. The cosponsors are Sen. Clay Scofield (R-Guntersville), Sen. Jabo Wagoner (R-Vestavia Hills), Sen. Harri Ann Smith (I-Slocumb), Sen. Greg Albritton (R-Bay Minette), Sen. Tim Melson (R-Florence); Sen. Jimmy Holley (R-Elba), Sen. Larry Stutts (R-Sheffield), Sen. Paul Bussman (R-Cullman), Sen. Phil Williams (R-Gadsden), Sen. Steve Livingston (R-Scottsboro), Sen. Bill Hightower (R-Mobile), Sen. Cam Ward (R-Alabaster), Sen. Gerald Dial (R-Lineville), Sen. Del Marsh (R-Anniston), and Sen. Clyde Chambliss (R-Prattville). The legislation, SB 124, would reduce the redemption period from one year to 90 days for residential property that could have been homesteaded in the prior tax year. The legislation excludes commercial, development, agricultural or timber land. The Alabama Bankers Association has signed on in support of this legislation. Rep. Ken Johnson (R-Moulton) will sponsor the legislation in the House.

### **2015 Bill Read Committee and Government Affairs Team**

The Bill Read Committee is comprised of REALTOR® members from across the state who review the hundreds of bills that are filed and provide feedback to the Government Affairs team. It requires many hours of reading and research on their part and is an essential function of defending the real estate industry from harmful legislation. This year a concerted effort was made to expand the committee to include more areas of expertise and geographic representation. The 2015 Bill Read Committee is chaired by GPA Chair Shawn Reeves and Vice Chair Mugs Mullins. Members include Sherry Dinges, Chad Fincher, Gina Grant, Keith Kelley, Fletcher Majors, Julie Minto, Peyton Norville, Sid Pugh, Bruce Sanford, Hall Tillman, and Bill Watts.

On the contract lobbying side for the 2015 legislative session, AAR's efforts will be bolstered by Dave Stewart of Bradley Arant Boult & Cummings, LLP and Bill Goolsby of Bill Goolsby & Associates. Stewart has over 12 years of experience in the executive and legislative branches of government. Prior to joining Bradley Arant, Stewart served as Chief of Staff and policy advisor to Governor Bob Riley. He has extensive knowledge and experience with the state budget process and state tax structure. Goolsby is a 30-year political veteran and brings a wealth of knowledge and background to the AAR team. Bill has extensive experience in issue management, political campaigns, and the management of legislative initiatives in the legislature.

In addition to the folks noted above, many members of the Government and Political Affairs Committee are engaged at the local level in contacting key local legislators in their districts and supporting the AAR agenda. Please be on the lookout for calls to action this session, respond, and encourage your fellow REALTORS® to do the same.

We all look forward to working for you to defend, protect and advance the real estate industry in Alabama!