

MEMBER VOICES CARRY THE DAY:

*DAR's Advocacy Results from the
153rd General Assembly*



The 153rd General Assembly adjourned in the early hours of July 1, after 5:00 AM, that carried over after a marathon final night on Tuesday, June 30th, and for the Delaware Association of REALTORS®, the close of session capped two years defined by engagement, persistence, and results. Every bill on DAR's final-night watch list cleared both chambers, with one notable exception. And on that single measure, it was the exception that told the clearest story about the power of member-driven advocacy.

A Grassroots Win on HB 451

House Bill 451 with House Amendment 1 (HB 451w/ HA 1) would have codified disparate-impact liability under Delaware's Fair Housing Act, establishing a burden-shifting framework reaching sales, rentals, lending, appraisals, criminal-history screening, and land-use decisions. It was the lone bill on DAR's priority list that did not advance to the Governor's desk, and that outcome was no accident.

It was the direct result of individual members stepping up. Advocates like Bobbi Slagle spoke directly with members of the Senate and with fellow stakeholders, laying out the real-world concerns the bill raised for Delaware's housing providers. Working alongside our coalition partners, DAR succeeded in having HB 451 w/ HA 1 tabled. The bill now carries over, allowing DAR and its allies to sit down and work through our concerns next year.

This is exactly what advocacy looks like when it works: informed members, at the right table, at the right moment.

A Third DAR-Drafted Bill Crosses the Finish Line: HB 458 w/ HA 1

Among the night's clearest victories was the passage of HB 458 with House Amendment 1, which prohibits counties and municipalities from requiring backflow-preventer installation or inspections in low-hazard single-family homes, professional offices, and commercial buildings that pose no genuine risk to the drinking-water supply. After moving through the Senate Executive Committee, it earned passage in both chambers. The bill was amended after working with Delaware Health and Social Services, as they agreed to develop more updated language for this bill.

Past President Phil McGinnis provided comments on behalf of DAR to help shepherd the bill through the committee process, and after moving through the Senate Executive Committee, it earned passage in both chambers.

HB 458 with HA 1 marks the third bill this session that DAR was instrumental in drafting to clear the full General Assembly, a testament to the Association's growing role not just in reacting to legislation, but in shaping it from the start. We anticipate the Governor will sign the bill into law soon.

SB 116: Engagement to the Very Last Vote

Not every outcome came down to a simple yes or no. **SB 116**, the Right of Redemption measure, did pass, but only after being amended multiple times to reflect the concerns DAR shared with lawmakers and coalition partners throughout the process.

While the Association did not support the bill as originally written, the changes secured along the way represent meaningful movement in the right direction. Our engagement continued right up to the bill's passage on the final day of the session. That is still a win for DAR members: it shows that staying at the table and staying engaged to the very end changes outcomes.

The Broader Slate

Beyond the headline measures, DAR's supported priorities moved steadily through the legislature. Bills aimed at improving the accuracy and fairness of property assessment and school taxes, HB 460 and HB 461 (Rep. Romer) and HB 462 (Rep. K. Williams), advanced, along with HS 1 for HB 450 (Rep. Bush), which reduces the time and cost of building much-needed housing and commercial development across the state. HJR 11 (Rep. Berry), establishing a working group to study a statewide HOPE Court program, and SB 9 (Sen. Hansen), addressing wetlands protection, also cleared both chambers.

Staying the Course

The results of this session, bills drafted, bills improved, and bills held back, all trace to the same source: members who show up and state leaders willing to work with us. Whether the goal was passing a measure that helps our members, softening one that gave us pause, or pressing pause on one that needed more work, DAR was present for every step.

That is our commitment: to stay the course, keep our members informed, and continue working with Delaware's leaders to represent the interests of REALTORS® across the state, every day, and every session.
