

GCAAR Issue Brief

2016 District of Columbia Year in Review

Recordation Taxes Lowered for First-time Buyers

With significant input and advocacy from REALTORS®, DC's "*First-time Homebuyer Tax Benefit Act*" passed into law. The Act cuts the recordation tax rate for first-time DC homebuyers from 1.45% to 0.725%.

Streamlining Operations at Department of Regulatory Affairs

After hearing REALTOR® concerns, DCRA is taking steps to streamline its overall operations. It considered issuing temporary Basic Business Licenses (BBLs) and expedited Certificates of Occupancy (CofOs).

Illegal Construction

We supported legislation to protect members and clients against illegal construction practices. Tougher enforcement is needed against bad actors, as is more transparency and accountability in the regulatory system.

Vacant/Blighted Properties

If a property is vacant but well maintained and using a lawful exemption, the government should respect the owner's rights to leave the property vacant. In 2016 we advocated for incentive-based approaches to keeping these properties moving.

Rental Regulations

We fought against proposed bills requiring increased reporting rules, standard leases, and month-to-month leases that would jeopardize the viability of individual property owners renting out their homes.

We supported:

- The elimination of CPI (Consumer Price Index) plus 2% standard annual rent increases for rent controlled and vacant units.
- Requirements that rent increases be based on amount actually charged, not what is registered with the Rent Administrator.
- Disclosure that tenant rights are not a condition of the rent concession.

The DC Council passed a bill that caps late fees at 5% or less, and standardizes a five-day grace period.