

October 24, 2005

Dear Sir or Madam:

I would like to comment on the National Association of Realtors ILD Policy and the competitiveness of the real estate industry.

The real estate industry is a model of competition that works. In an economy in which large, national corporations -- such as Wal-Mart and Microsoft -- dominate the marketplace, real estate stands apart. We are an industry made up predominantly of small businesses and independent contractors who represent the entrepreneurial spirit this country was founded on.

All of us serve localized markets where we compete for business every day. Fierce competition is fueled largely by the uniquely intense and personalized nature of the service we provide to our clients -- which, in turn, determines our future success through referrals and return business.

Barriers to entry are low. If you are willing to take the time to learn the business in your local market, pass the state license examination and adhere to the REALTOR® code of ethics, there is nothing to stand in the way of success in this industry. I had to learn the business and pass the state licensing examination, but it is my own work ethic, commitment to professional standards and dedication to client satisfaction that determine my success.

Even through the economic downturns our country has experienced in the past few years, our industry has continued to provide opportunity -- something I would say is confirmed by the thousands of new agents that join our profession every year and the over 2 million Americans who are now licensed to provide professional real estate services in communities across the country.

Nothing encourages a competitive business environment more than providing consumers with choice. In the residential real estate marketplace, consumers not only are able to choose from more than 76,000 brokerage firms and more than 1.2 million REALTORS®, but also from a variety of business models.

An example of the type of competition I face between other real estate firms is a website called "HungryAgents.com". I agreed to become a member of their business referral network, and I actually "bid" my services out to anonymous members of the public who go their site and seek out an agent in a particular area who would like to vie for the contract. I get a limited amount of information about the property, and if I am interested, I fill in the form telling what services I will provide, and what my fee will be. If I am selected by the owner, I get a subsequent e-mail with the contact information. If I am successful at listing and/or selling a property, I pay a fee to Hungry Agents. It is competition at its most basic level!

Other examples of daily competition are played out in my own office – we are all very proprietary about who we are discussing listings with, and what deals we are working on. After all, we are charged with the responsibility to work for our clients to get the best deals at all times – regardless of whether it steps on another agent’s toes or not. In other words, friendships in the office come second to the competitiveness of the sale. After all, it all comes down to which agent actually puts the deal together for their client (and gets paid for their work), right? I can’t imagine a more competitive job!

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me at the numbers below. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this very important topic!

Kristy Buck, ABR, Agent
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