

Contact: Robin Spensieri, Communications Director

Email: [rspensieri@virginiarealtors.org](http://rspensieri@virginiarealtors.org)

Telephone: 404.433.6015

VIRGINIA REALTORS® PRAISE PASSAGE OF ASSOCIATION HEALTH PLAN AUTHORITY

New legislation could offer affordable healthcare options for associations

Richmond, Va - (March 4, 2019) - The Virginia REALTORS® praise the Virginia General Assembly for passing both House Bill 2443 and Senate Bill 1689.

These bills, though technically different, would allow an association, like the Virginia REALTORS® and its nearly 34,000 members, the ability to band together to negotiate health insurance plans on the large group market. The ability to negotiate could lead to better, more affordable health insurance coverage options.

“The exorbitant costs associated with obtaining health insurance as a small business has reached a critical level,” said Beckwith Bolle, 2019 President of the Virginia REALTORS®. “I hear this concern from our members regardless of where they reside or work.”

“We believe that over 7,000 REALTORS® have been forced to make the decision to go without health insurance, largely because of the high costs associated with obtaining the coverage,” added Terrie Suit, Chief Executive Officer of the Virginia REALTORS®.

“In 2018, Virginia expanded Medicaid for over 400,000 of our fellow Virginians. Unfortunately, many of our REALTORS®, and countless other small business owners, are not able to take advantage of that benefit. This is our chance. Association health plans allow us to negotiate lower cost, better healthcare coverage for our members,” noted Bolle.

“We sincerely appreciate the bi-partisan group of General Assembly members that voted for both of these bills and look forward to working with Governor Northam in the coming weeks to address any concerns he may have,” added Bolle.

The technical difference between House Bill 2443 and Senate Bill 1689 is that Senate Bill 1689 would allow independent contractors to take advantage of association health plans. Most REALTORS® are independent contractors.

# # #

**About Virginia REALTORS®**

Virginia REALTORS® (previously known as the Virginia Association of REALTORS®) is the largest professional trade association in Virginia, representing nearly 34,000 REALTORS® engaged in the residential and commercial real estate business. Virginia REALTORS® serves as an advocate for homeownership and homeowners and represents the interests of property owners in the Commonwealth of Virginia. For more information, visit www.virginiarealtors.org or follow Virginia REALTORS® on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

NOTE: The term REALTOR® is a registered collective membership mark that identifies a real estate professional who is a member of the National Association of REALTORS® and subscribes to its strict Code of Ethics.