



**NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF
REALTORS®**

The housing debate is intensifying in 2026 — and REALTORS® will need to navigate proposals that affect supply, affordability, and property rights.

2026 STATE & LOCAL POLICY TRENDS

WHAT REALTORS® NEED TO WATCH

TREND

SUPPLY ACCELERATION

1

THE FACT: Pending home sales remained near multi-decade lows in 2025 due to ultra-low inventory and mortgage rates that are keeping millions of homeowners locked in.

ZONING & LAND-USE REFORM

Policymakers are rethinking zoning rules to allow more housing types and expand the supply in ways that fit local community needs.

PERMITTING REFORM

Faster, clearer approvals are becoming a priority as policymakers look to cut delays, costs, and uncertainty.

INCREASING EXISTING HOME SALES

Policymakers are exploring ways to reduce transaction friction and encourage more homeowners to put homes on the market.

TREND

BARRIERS TO AFFORDABILITY

2

THE FACT: Total homeowner costs consumed **31.4%** of median income nationally in late 2025, above the **28%** affordability threshold, and expenses for homeowners with a mortgage have jumped **26%** since 2019.

PROPERTY INSURANCE

Premium spikes and shrinking coverage options are making insurance a major affordability and market-stability issue.

PROPERTY TAXES

Rising assessments are pushing tax burdens higher and fueling calls for homeowner relief.

TRANSFER TAXES

More governments are eyeing transfer taxes for revenue, even though they can discourage mobility and raise costs.

TREND

PROPERTY RIGHTS & THE RENTAL MARKET

3

THE FACT: Roughly six in ten REALTOR® association staff report concern about rent control spreading in their areas, with even greater concern about broader tenant protection packages.

RENT CONTROL

Rent caps remain politically attractive, even as evidence shows they can reduce supply and dampen investment.

TENANT PROTECTIONS

New mandates on evictions, fees, screening, and compliance are expanding rapidly across states and cities.

SHORT-TERM RENTALS

Communities continue to debate how to balance housing concerns, neighborhood impacts, and owners' right to use their property.

EMERGING ISSUES TO WATCH

DATA CENTERS

AI infrastructure is creating new competition for land, power, and water in fast-growing communities.

BUILDING CODES

Updated code requirements can improve resilience and efficiency, but often add cost and complexity.

FRAUD

Wire fraud, title fraud, deed theft, & AI-enabled scams are driving new scrutiny of real estate transactions.

WHY IT MATTERS:

REALTORS® bring the on-the-ground market knowledge policymakers need to avoid solutions that sound good in theory but backfire in practice.

REALTORS® are members of the National Association of REALTORS®.