IAR’s team of lobbyists analyzed the 6,230 bills introduced in the 2013 Spring Session of the Illinois General Assembly. Of them, 217 merited special attention because they could affect homeowners, the REALTOR® business or private property rights. IAR’s advocacy team and our 41,000 members worked up until the session’s end on May 31 to kill bad policy, alter flawed legislation and promote the interests of IAR’s membership and our clients and customers.

Here’s a look at 14 notable victories:

1. **Senate Bill 1655 (Haine/Sims), an IAR initiative** to amend the Real Estate License Act to clarify and update several provisions of the Act. We worked with the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) and others on this bill. There was NO opposition. **Passed both the Senate and the House unanimously; sent to the Governor.**

2. **IAR successfully lobbied for changes to Senate Bill 41 (Munoz/Currie).** As initially introduced, the bill would have allowed local tax assessors to file a TAX LIEN and impose significant penalties and interest when a homeowner received a homestead exemption for which they were not eligible, even if the violation was unintentional or the homeowner wasn’t aware of ineligibility. As a result of IAR’s direct lobbying and several Calls For Action to our members, an amended version of this bill passed. The bill, now limited to Cook County, will treat property taxpayers who simply fail to pro-actively determine and notify the Assessor of their ineligibility in a much fairer way. Information provided to property taxpayers is enhanced and an amnesty period will be required. **Passed the Senate and the House; sent to the Governor.**

3. **Senate Bill 92 (Sullivan/Sacia)** is the compromise worked out last year with the Auctioneers Association to allow auctioneers to collaborate with real estate licensees in real estate auctions. It maintains the provision that the auctioning of real estate is a licensed activity under the Real Estate License Act. **Passed the Senate and the House; sent to the Governor.**

4. **House Bill 2764 (Scherer/Munoz)** amends the Highway Advertising Control Act to clarify the regulation of signs advertising the sale or lease of real estate or on premise business signs. This bill ensures that these signs will NOT be subject to state-imposed registration and permit costs. **Passed the Senate and the House; sent to the Governor.**

5. **IAR successfully opposed Senate Bill 1244 (Link),** which would have amended the Counties Code to authorize Lake County to enact a $3 surcharge on recording real estate-related documents to fund an affordable housing trust fund. IAR fundamentally OPPOSED using a real estate transfer fee – which makes housing LESS affordable – to fund an “affordable housing” initiative. **Passed the Senate; DEFEATED in House committee.**
6. **IAR successfully opposed legislation to empower non-home rule units to impose landlord licensing and so-called “crime free housing” requirements on landlords (Senate Bill 1155 and House Bill 2437).** We have serious issues with some of these ordinances that home rule units currently enact. This approach puts landlords at risk of losing property due to tenants’ actions, and is unfair to landlords and tenants. Tenant groups also oppose these bills. IAR supports alternative approaches such as House Bill 1532 (DeLuca), which provide landlords with greater ability to handle recurrent disruptive and criminal activity on their premises. We encourage broader discussions on a comprehensive approach that brings fairness and uniformity to both home rule and non-home rule regulations. **None of these bills passed.**

7. The Association successfully lobbied for changes to House Bill 595 (Nekritz), but worked with the sponsor, the Condominium Managers Association and IDFPR to address concerns. As introduced, the bill amended the Community Association Manager (CAM) Licensing Act to establish a new “supervisor” license, and imposes additional requirements on real estate licensees who are condominium manager licensees. The bill was amended to address IAR’s concerns about additional requirements for REALTORS®. As approved, members holding a Managing Broker’s license will be exempt from the additional 10-hour course requirement of the newly created CAM supervisor license. Those members with a broker license would still have to meet the 10-hour coursework requirement if they choose to manage and supervise a community association management firm. **Passed the House and the Senate; sent to the Governor.**

8. **IAR successfully opposed Senate Bill 2375 (Haine),** which would extend the Criminal Housing Management offense in the Criminal Code to commercial properties. The offense applies to those who manage or control real estate (whether an owner or manager), if he or she recklessly permits the physical condition or facilities of the real estate and cause it to become or remain in any condition which endangers the health or safety of a person other than the defendant. We worked with the sponsor and proponents to help address the situations they are concerned with in a manner that addresses REALTORS®’ concerns, but no legislation was passed this session.

9. **IAR supported legislative efforts to reduce and/or make the provision of local government services more efficient. (SB 1585 (Biss/Gabel); SB 494 (Cullerton, T/Conroy).** **Passed the House and the Senate; sent to the Governor.**

10. IAR sought and got significant changes to House Bill 2832 (Lang/Silverstein), and worked with Rep. Lang, the Illinois Bar Association and Cook County Recorder on changes to the legislation which assists County Recorders in addressing fraudulent activity in the recording process in a manner that puts the property owner in control of any review of a potentially fraudulent document filed on their property. IAR, the Illinois Bar Association and the Land Title Association were initially concerned this bill enabled recorders to decide which documents are recorded in the normal process, and which are placed on a “review registry.” We maintained our fight against fraud, but ensured that the recording process did not become a subjective process determined by each county recorder that could delay transations. **Passed the House and the Senate; sent to the Governor.**

11. **IAR stalled House Bill 197 (Mayfield),** a change to the TIF law to allocate to schools additional tax dollars attributable to inflation. After further review and input from the commercial members, this bill was ultimately OPPOSED by IAR. **Did not pass.**
IAR successfully opposed House Bill 2326 (Chapa LaVia) to amend the Freedom of Information Act to modify the definition of “commercial purpose” and to change requirements for requests to inspect or copy public records. Did not pass.

The Association opposed House Bill 3262 (Verschoore) amending the Public Water District Act and the Highway Code UNLESS AMENDED. The bill would have removed the requirement of a Public Water District to get the consent of a private landowner to place pipes or conduits in the easement originally granted for highway purposes. Did not pass.

IAR successfully opposed Senate Bill 1097 (Noland) to enact the Consumer Contract Plain Language Act, which would apply to brokerage agreements and real estate contracts. IAR believes that contracts between parties should contain whatever language the parties and their attorneys feel is necessary to accurately reflect the nature of the agreement. Did not pass.

Want to learn more about the 217 bills IAR’s lobbyists tracked in efforts to protect your business? Get the full list at www.IARactioncenter.org

Make your contribution count. Visit www.RPACNow.com to contribute today.