

The provisions of Senate Bill 560 that alter the requirements for individuals who have been licensed for 10 years or more represent a significant departure from the policy adopted by the General Assembly in 1998. Chapter 360 of the Acts of 1998 reduced the continuing education requirements for those licensees from 15 clock-hours to 6 clock-hours regarding relevant changes to federal, State or local laws. Senate Bill 560 would increase this requirement to at least 7.5 hours, and possibly 15 hours, for these individuals. I find it troubling that a licensee who is currently required to complete 6 hours of continuing education would now, 4 years after the law was changed, again have to complete 15 hours unless the individual chooses to join a "nationally recognized real estate trade association." No policy justification has been advanced to justify this change so soon after the clock hour requirement was reduced.

Since the passage of Senate Bill 560, I have received over 75 letters from licensees requesting that I veto the bill. These individuals have been licensed for many years, but for various reasons have chosen not to join a trade association. Now, they will be faced with the decision to complete an additional 9 clock-hours of instruction, or pay dues to an organization they have consciously decided not to join. These Marylanders have expressed their opinion that they are being forced to take additional courses or sign up for a membership drive for no apparent policy reason.

The new requirement regarding an enhanced ethics course is meritorious. That requirement could have been integrated into the current continuing education program without imposing additional burdens on licensees. The importance of the ethics course does not, in my opinion, outweigh the interests of the individuals who will be affected by the arbitrary reversal of the 1998 decision to reduce the continuing education requirements for long-term licensees.

For the above reasons, I have vetoed Senate Bill 560.

Sincerely,
Parris N. Glendening
Governor

Senate Bill No. 560

AN ACT concerning

Business Occupations and Professions - Real Estate Licenses - Continuing Education Requirements for Licensure and Renewal

FOR the purpose of requiring an applicant for licensure as a real estate salesperson, associate real estate broker, or real estate broker to take a course in real estate ethics; altering the circumstances under which a real estate licensee qualifies for renewal of a license; authorizing certain licensees holding a license from another state to substitute certain clock hours of continuing education instruction; expanding the subject matter for continuing education instruction that is approved by the State Real Estate Commission; adding a requirement for a certain course in continuing education instruction to be offered during certain years, including a discussion of certain practices; adding a provision through