



February 14, 2017

The Honorable Greg Abbott  
Governor of Texas  
P.O. Box 12428  
Austin, TX 78711

The Honorable Dan Patrick  
Lt. Governor of Texas  
P.O. Box 12068  
Austin, TX 78711

The Honorable Joe Straus  
Speaker of the House  
P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768

Dear Governor Abbott, Governor Patrick and Speaker Straus:

The Texas Land Title Association (TLTA), along with the key trade associations representing REALTORS<sup>®</sup>, builders, lenders, oil and gas producers and small businesses, represent the men and women who work every day to ensure Texas has a strong and predictable real estate economy. Our collective memberships have a considerable amount of expertise as it relates to the laws and regulations that comprise our real estate system in Texas.

Today, we are proud to say that Texas has one of the healthiest and most robust real estate economies in the world. Our current system works very well, due in large part to the public policies our legislators have wisely put in place over time.

However, there are proposals being pushed by a small group of individuals to change our system of pricing and producing title insurance. These proposals would destabilize our Texas real estate economy and negatively impact homeowners and small businesses. We respectfully request your support in **opposing** any legislation that would dismantle the successful Texas title insurance system that is working so well for our state.

Any legislation departing from our current title insurance rate system will:

- Increase the price of title insurance for average homeowners,
- Decrease transparency,
- Reduce competition, and
- Result in riskier real estate transactions.

In Texas, homebuyers and commercial developers today are able to purchase title insurance policies at rates 15% **lower** than they were 25 years ago.

Texans also enjoy the benefits of choice and competition. There are title insurance agents in 251 of 254 counties across the state. These small businesses employ more than 13,000 Texans dedicated to providing consumers a transparent, reliable and affordable product that protects against financial losses.

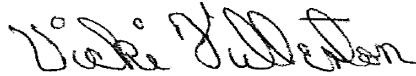
Texas is also considered the safest state for real estate transactions (compared to all similar large, populous states). Title insurance professionals in Texas research public records thoroughly before transactions are finalized so homebuyers can have peace of mind and are not faced with the horror of a claim to their property. The goal of our system is to eliminate claims by doing the work on the front end of the process. Obviously our approach is working well, since Texas has a very low claims experience.

The Texas title industry is vital to our real estate market – which is critical to the Texas economy. Our land title system is considered the best in the nation. Let's not mess with that success.

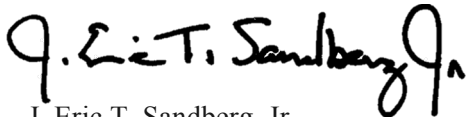
Sincerely,



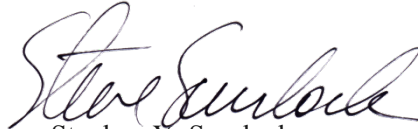
Leslie Midgley, CAE  
Texas Land Title Association



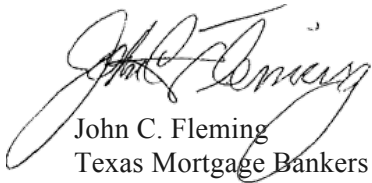
Vicki Fullerton  
Texas Association of REALTORS



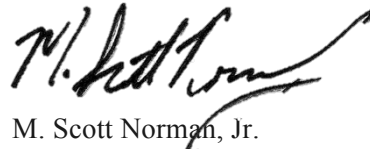
J. Eric T. Sandberg, Jr.  
Texas Bankers Association



Stephen Y. Scurlock  
Independent Bankers Association of Texas



John C. Fleming  
Texas Mortgage Bankers Association



M. Scott Norman, Jr.  
Texas Association of Builders



Will Newton  
National Federation of Independent Business



Ed Longanecker  
Texas Independent Producers & Royalty Owners  
Association