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CAI Approves significant policy changes to Board Member Education public policy

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Dawn Bauman

The Community Associations Institute (CAI) approved a significant update to its board member education public policy. The update comes in response to a marked increase in legislation nationwide addressing board member education following the 2021 tragic partial condominium collapse in Surfside, Fla. This incident highlighted the critical need for well-educated and competent board members who understand their roles and responsibilities. Educated boards have the ability to implement best practices and ensure good governance in community associations.

CAI firmly believes board members should be knowledgeable and proficient in their governance duties. The updated policy emphasizes the importance of board member education in maintaining safe and well-managed community associations. However, CAI ultimately concluded mandatory government-imposed training requirements could have unintended consequences. Such mandates could deter volunteerism, a cornerstone of community associations, and potentially lead to costly education programs that are insufficient to cover the essential core competencies and best practices needed for effective governance.

A key aspect of the updated policy is its nuanced approach to legislative involvement. CAI acknowledges the importance of board member education and recognizes the potential downside of mandatory training requirements and seeks to support effective and practical solutions. CAI will not actively pursue mandatory training legislation.

By advocating for accessible and comprehensive educational resources, CAI aims to empower board members to fulfill their roles effectively without the burden of mandatory training requirements. This approach ensures community associations continue to thrive under the leadership of well-informed and dedicated volunteer board members.

The updated CAI public policy reads in part:

Board Member Education

Summary

Community Associations Institute (“CAI”) supports education and training to assist community association volunteer leaders (board members) in understanding and carrying out their responsibility to govern the community association they serve. A community association volunteer leader is a board member of a condominium, housing cooperative, townhome, homeowner association, or planned community.

CAI encourages board members to obtain education in governing documents, fiduciary duties and duty of care, ethics and leadership, rules creation and enforcement, financials and budgeting, reserves and financial responsibilities, maintenance responsibilities, risk management and insurance, board and owner meetings, elections and responsibilities, and conflict resolution and community building. CAI understands the importance of making board member education accessible

to all governing board members. CAI encourages board members to get education without state mandates. If states are considering mandated board member education, CAI recommends state legislatures work with CAI's state legislative action committees (LACs) to establish a minimum level of education for all community association board members.

Dawn Bauman, CAE, is senior vice president, CAI Government & Public Affairs and Foundation for Community Association Research (FCAR) executive director, Falls Church, VA.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540