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To: Senate Commerce Committee
From: Mark Tomb, VP of Governmental Affairs
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Re: Written Only Neutral Testimony Regarding SB 137

Chairman Olson and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Kansas Association of REALTORS® (KAR) regarding SB 137. This legislation produces a standardized process to grant Kansas occupational licenses to individuals currently licensed in another state with an intent to move to Kansas. KAR supports the overall effort to recognize the skills that licensed individuals possess and believe that it is important to remove employment barriers that do not serve a valid purpose.

The Kansas Association of REALTORS® represents over 10,000 members involved in residential, agricultural and commercial real estate and has advocated on behalf of the state's property owners for 100 years. REALTORS® serve an important role in the state's economy and are dedicated to working with our elected officials to create better communities by supporting economic development, a high quality of life and providing affordable housing opportunities while protecting the rights of private property owners.

While REALTORS® support the policy objectives and most of the bill, we would request additional language be included to preserve the ability of the Kansas Real Estate Commission (KREC) to conduct appropriate background checks and have those results before issuing any type of license. A home is the largest investment for most Kansans and consumers would be better protected if KREC continues to receive the results from a KBI background check prior to the granting of any type of license. This could be accomplished by increasing the number of days before required to issue a license or by allowing licensing bodies such as KREC to provide applicants with a notice that a one-time reasonable extension is needed to obtain only the KBI background check portion of the application.

In closing, the Kansas Association of REALTORS® would like to highlight that this legislation makes a number of positive changes to occupational licensing. Real estate is the primary foundation of wealth building for middle income Kansans and it makes sense to have reasonable safeguards in place that those licensed by the state undergo reasonable vetting and that licensing bodies review relevant information before granting licenses. Thank you for the opportunity to provide the committee with comments regarding SB 137.