

April 5, 2021

Charlie Oppler
2021 President

Bob Goldberg
Chief Executive Officer

ADVOCACY GROUP

Shannon McGahn
Chief Advocacy Officer

The Honorable Mikie Sherrill
U.S. House of Representatives
1414 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Sherrill:

On behalf of the more than 1.4 million members of the National Association of REALTORS®, I thank you for introducing legislation to increase the limitation on the deduction for state and local taxes. The SALT Relief and Marriage Penalty Elimination Act would significantly increase the tax incentives for purchasing and owning a home for millions of Americans.

Although the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 delivered numerous welcomed changes to families and individuals across the country, this landmark legislation also brought the unintentional – and unfortunate – consequence of significantly reducing the tax incentives for buying and owning a home in America. Because the standard deduction now exceeds many more Americans' total itemized deductions, far fewer homeowners and potential buyers can now take advantage of property tax and mortgage interest deductions as could before 2018.

For tens of millions of Americans, limiting the amount of state and local taxes that can be deducted greatly diminished or erased the long-standing tax incentives of owning a home. Moreover, the SALT cap features two inherent flaws that are inequitable in their treatment of taxpayers. First, because the limit is the same for single and for joint filers, it results in a serious penalty on marriage. Second, because it was not indexed for inflation, the limit effectively goes down each year, unfairly affecting even more Americans as home values – and thus property taxes – rise.

If enacted, your legislation would help correct many of the aforementioned problems. By tying the SALT limit to the standard deduction, the amount of the deductible limit would be increased, which would allow many more current and prospective homeowners to regain the homeownership incentive that our tax law has provided for decades. And since the standard deduction amount for married couples is exactly twice that for single filers, the indefensible marriage penalty in the SALT cap would be eliminated. Finally, the bill would also automatically correct the lack of indexing because the standard deduction is increased each year based on inflation.



Homeownership has long been a vital part of the American Dream. Research shows that an overwhelming majority of current renters aspire to own a home., and we know that our nation's faith in homeownership has persisted through the Great Recession. For well over a century, our tax system has helped American families to reach this Dream. Thank you for your leadership in helping to ensure that it continues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charlie Oppler", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Charlie Oppler
2021 President, National Association of REALTORS®