



TENNESSEE POLITICAL COORDINATOR (TNPC) PROGRAM

1. **Introduction**
2. **Political Coordinator Responsibilities**
Pledge Agreement
3. **Issues**
4. **Tips to Effectively Communicate and Build a Relationship
with Your Legislator(s)**
Successfully Schedule and Hold Meetings
Meeting Follow-Up
Quick Reference Do's and Don'ts
5. **Writing Legislators**
Sample Letters
6. **How to Complete a Field Report**
7. **Legislative Process**
Tennessee Legislative Flow Chart
How Ideas Become Bills
8. **Always Remember**
Contacts
Helpful Links

Introduction

The purpose of this program is for Tennessee REALTORS® to have advocates on The Hill who build close relationships with legislators throughout the state so when issues arise, REALTORS® have an influential voice on homeownership and property rights.

Tennessee Political Coordinators (TNPCs) play a key role in our advocacy efforts. Those who apply to be a TNPC must be approved by the association President after careful evaluation and recommendation from our Governmental Affairs leadership.

As a TNPC, your role will be both important and rewarding. *You will be the face of 36,000+ Tennessee REALTORS®.*

Your success, and that of the association, hinges on your ability to build and grow a great relationship with your member(s) of the legislature. Legislators want to know which issues affect their constituents, and we want you to help deliver the message on issues important to Tennessee REALTORS®. Each session, legislators are presented with thousands of bills, and it is critical to have key people there to help explain the legislation that affects Tennessee REALTORS®.

This handbook outlines TNPC responsibilities and resources to help make your work as a TNPC a success. Please do not hesitate to reach out to our Governmental Affairs department with questions you may have. **Contact information for assistance is at the back of this handbook.*

Thank you for being willing to share your time and volunteering to represent thousands of REALTORS® throughout the great state of Tennessee!



Tennessee Political Coordinator Responsibilities

Note: TNPCs may serve as a coordinator for only one senator and/or representative.

- **Serve as a TNPC for a two-year term.**
- **Sign the Tennessee Political Coordinator Pledge.** TNPCs should ensure they understand their responsibilities and duties of this position when signing the pledge. Once the signed pledge is received, it will be kept on record during your time as a TNPC.
- **Advocate on behalf of Tennessee REALTORS® membership.** TNPCs are advocating for Tennessee REALTORS® and working to educate legislators on any legislation that could potentially impact REALTOR® interests. It is also crucial to put aside your personal political ideology and be a voice on behalf of the membership! You must remain neutral on issues and not allow your personal opinions and views to hamper your role and ability to work on behalf of Tennessee REALTORS®.
- **Build, grow, and maintain great relationships with legislators.** The success of this program depends on how proactive TNPCs are in fostering great relationships with their legislators. A great relationship should be a top priority for TNPCs.
- **Contacting your assigned legislator(s) and completing a field report is required at least once a quarter (four times a year minimum).** Having contact with assigned legislator(s) once a quarter maintains a relationship with them. Of course, TNPCs are highly encouraged to have contact *beyond* the minimum requirement. A field report must be completed every time you have a meeting with your legislator(s). Completing a field report detailing the meeting will help the association stay updated on what legislators are saying and where they stand on REALTOR® issues. It will also alert the association to any needed follow-up.
- **Respond to *Calls for Action*.** As a TNPC we look to you to take necessary action by responding to CFAs and encouraging others to respond as well. This is an incredibly important step you should always take to ensure that your voice is heard.
- **Lead and attend *Tennessee Day on the Hill* meeting(s) with your legislator(s).** You will be the one leading the Day on the Hill meeting for your legislator(s), so it is important to keep the members on track and focus the conversation on educating legislators on the issues. TNPCs will receive a list of talking points prior to Day on the Hill.
- **Participate and complete all required training.** TNPCs will be notified of any required training they must complete in order to remain a TNPC.

Tennessee Political Coordinator Pledge

The position of a Tennessee Political Coordinator (TNPC) will allow members to serve as advocates on behalf of all Tennessee REALTORS® and help legislators understand issues and concerns affecting the real estate industry and property rights. Through fostering a strong relationship with legislator(s), TNPCs spearhead communication, ensuring the voices of Tennessee REALTORS® are heard and understood. In order for the Tennessee Political Coordinator (TNPC) program to be successful, all who are selected as TNPCs must agree to perform and complete the following responsibilities (for more information, read the "Responsibilities" section in the TNPC handbook):

1. Serve a two-year term.
2. Advocate on behalf of Tennessee REALTORS®; setting aside all personal views and opinions and working toward the success of REALTOR® issues.
3. Build, grow, and maintain great relationships with assigned legislator(s).
4. Contact assigned legislator(s) and complete a field report at least once per quarter (four times a year).
5. Respond to all Calls for Action (at the local, state, and national level) and encourage others to respond.
6. Attend the annual Tennessee Day on the Hill and lead the meeting with your legislator(s).
7. Participate in and complete all required training.

By signing below, I hereby certify that I have read and fully understand the responsibilities of a Tennessee Political Coordinator (TNPC) and pledge that I will perform them to the best of my abilities while serving as a TNPC. Further, I understand and acknowledge that if I do not meet the standards of performance in carrying out TNPCs responsibilities, I will be removed from the position.

TN House District: _____ Senate District: _____

Name of Legislator(s): _____

TNPC Name: _____

TNPC Signature: _____

Date: _____

Issues

Each year, the Tennessee REALTORS® Governmental Affairs Committee will go through all bills that could impact our members, property owners, and the REALTOR® industry and determine the stance of the state association. Legislative issues will vary each year depending on the bills being filed. Tennessee REALTORS® will host Day on the Hill at the state Capitol where all TNPCs will be provided talking points covering the current legislative issues to educate and discuss with their legislator(s). Every TNPC will receive advanced information prior to Day on the Hill event so that TNPCs can schedule and prepare accordingly.

Tips to Effectively Communicate and Build a Relationship with Legislators

Relationships are critical in every aspect of society. The key to be a successful TNPC is to have a great relationship with your assigned legislator(s). Trust is built when good rapport is established. Having a close relationship ensures effective communication, respect, and trust.

To ensure that you establish and maintain a close rapport, always be on time for meetings, be prepared, and remain respectful, even if the legislator disagrees with you. Keeping these things in mind will cultivate a positive work environment and help continue to grow a great relationship between you and your legislator.

Get to Know Your Legislator(s)

Research your legislator(s). Find out about their education, profession, and interests. This information is beneficial when you have meetings as great conversation starters, ice breakers, and may even have shared interests you can discuss. This also helps to build a bond that will lead to a fantastic relationship to help further REALTOR® interests.

Successfully Schedule and Hold Meetings

The point of holding meetings and talking with legislators is to help them understand about issues that are important to Tennessee REALTORS® and persuade them to vote on legislation that is in the best interests of our members and the public.

- It is important to know the legislator(s) office hours and location, whether at the Capitol or in their hometown. Be sure to schedule meetings well in advance. It is also important to be familiar with talking points and issues in advance—*not* the day of the meeting. Being well prepared and timely will make a great impression and show how professional and serious you are as an advocate for Tennessee REALTORS®.

- Be on time for the meeting. A good rule of thumb is to show up prepared for your meeting 10-15 minutes before its scheduled start time.
- Stick to one or two topics per meeting. This will help maintain the focus and keep you from getting off-topic.
- Keep to your scheduled time (or shorter, if possible). Legislators, especially while in session, have a very busy schedule. Always make sure you quickly and effectively communicate your point.
- **Never exaggerate or misrepresent facts!** If you don't know something, that's OK – but **it's not OK to exaggerate or misrepresent and/or make up facts!** If you don't know something, let the legislator know that you are not sure but that you will circle back with them when you have the answer or facts needed.
- **Never argue with a legislator and, most important, always remain respectful and professional.** Keep your temper and feelings in check. Remember, you are representing more than 29,000 Tennessee REALTORS® who are depending on your professionalism.
- One way to create a bond between you and your legislator(s) is to give them a personal, real-world anecdote that effectively illustrates the issue. This can be especially effective when expressing the urgency and importance of an issue. A plus: this helps to build that personal relationship between you and the legislator.

Here is an example:

Less effective: “If the state raises taxes on businesses, it will cost REALTORS® an estimated \$10 million a year.”

More effective: “If the state raises taxes on businesses, it will cost me and my fellow REALTORS® thousands of dollars each year and will result in some of us to either having to close shop or lay off employees.”

*****REMEMBER: NEVER EXAGGERATE OR MISREPRESENT FACTS*****

- At the end of your meeting, thank the legislator for their time. If you have a business card with your contact information, feel free to give it to the legislator so that they can contact you if they wish.
- If you would like to designate another member to attend a meeting in your place, please alert Jennifer or Logan at the state association, and ensure that the designee is well-prepared with talking points to stay on message.

Meeting Follow-Up

- It's always a good idea to send a "Thank You" letter on personal stationary to the legislator after your meeting, thanking them for their time and noting that you will look for their vote(s) on issues of interest to REALTORS®.
- Keep an eye on how your legislator(s) vote. If they are undecided, give them a call in a couple of weeks to check on their decision. If their vote is in accordance with REALTORS® request, make sure to send a "Thank You" immediately.
- It never hurts to use social media to thank your legislator(s) (in addition to your "Thank You" note) including posting pictures you may have taken during meetings or events.
- File a Field Report! This required step is very important; it helps the association know what was discussed during the meeting and flags association staff if follow-up is needed.

Writing Legislators

TNPCs are encouraged to meet with legislators beyond the required four times a year, but in addition to in-person meetings and phone calls, writing letters (on professional letterhead) is a great way to stay in touch and remind legislators of the Tennessee REALTORS® interests.

Letter-Writing Tips

- Be polite, courteous, and reasonable. **Always ask—do not demand.** A letter's tone and attitude can be misinterpreted; therefore, a positive letter will be better received and prompt a positive response in return.
- Letters should be clear, brief, and to the point. Aim for a length of one page maximum.
- Be truthful, factual, and honest.
- If you choose to craft a handwritten letter, make sure it is legible and easy to read.
- As with your meetings, keep to one or two topics and when referring to legislation, make sure you reference the bill number if possible.
- Be timely. The sooner your letter is received the greater the chances of influencing the legislator's position.

- As with writing a letter of thanks when your legislator(s) vote in accordance with your request, it is permissible to write a letter of dissatisfaction if legislator(s) do not vote per your request; however, the letter must be tactful, respectful, and polite. Make it a point that you look forward to working with them in the future. If you are going to send a letter of dissatisfaction, please send to Tennessee REALTORS® Governmental Affairs Department first for approval.

Sample Letters

General Issues Sample Letter

(LETTERHEAD)

Date

The Honorable (LEGISLATOR NAME)

(OFFICE ADDRESS)

Nashville, TN 37243

RE: (STATE THE TOPIC OR BILL NUMBER, AUTHOR AND SUBJECT IF YOU ARE WRITING ABOUT A PARTICULAR LEGISLATIVE BILL I)

Dear (REPRESENTATIVE/SENATOR) (LAST NAME):

My name is (FIRST AND LAST NAME), and I am a Tennessee REALTOR® Political Coordinator who lives in (or represents) your district.

(STATE WHY YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE THE BILL OR OTHER ISSUE HERE. CHOOSE ONLY A FEW OF THE STRONGEST POINTS THAT SUPPORT YOUR POSITION. STATE THEM CLEARLY AND CONCISELY.)

(INCLUDE A PERSONAL STORY. TELL THEM WHY THE ISSUE IS PERSONALLY IMPORTANT TO YOU, YOUR FAMILY, YOUR BUSINESS AND YOUR COMMUNITY.)

(FINALLY, AGAIN CLEARLY STATE HOW YOU WANT YOUR REPRESENTATIVE TO VOTE OR ACT ON THE ISSUE AND ASK FOR A RESPONSE.)

Sincerely,

SIGN YOUR NAME

Print your name

Address

Thank You Letter

(LETTERHEAD)

Date

The Honorable (LEGISLATOR NAME)

(OFFICE ADDRESS)

Nashville, TN 37243

Dear (REPRESENTATIVE/SENATOR) (LAST NAME):

I wanted to personally thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to meet with me and other REALTORS® regarding (STATE ISSUE(s) discussed. Only mention the most important issue(s) here.) We were grateful to have the opportunity to sit down with you to bring these issues to your attention.

As you recall, (BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE ISSUE AGAIN IN ONLY ONE OR TWO SENTENCES. IF YOU WERE ASKING FOR A SPECIFIC VOTE ON A BILL, STATE THE BILL AND REMIND THEM OF THE REALTOR® POSITION AND THE BILL NUMBER/AUTHOR.)

Once again, thank you for your time and attention on this important matter. On behalf of the 29,000+ REALTORS® in Tennessee, we appreciate your leadership and I look forward to continuing to work with you on this and many other issues in the future.

Sincerely,

SIGN YOUR NAME

Print your name

Address



Do

- Schedule meetings well in advance and conduct research on your legislator(s) and issues that are the subject of the scheduled meeting.
- Arrive 10-15 minutes prior to scheduled meeting time.
- Be prepared and knowledgeable.
- Always be polite, respectful, and eloquent.
- Build, grow, and maintain positive and personal relationships with your legislator(s).
- Be mindful of the allotted meeting time. Get to the point and stay on one or two issues per meeting.
- Put personal views and opinions aside and stay on track!
- Send "Thank You" letters after each meeting and when legislator(s) vote as requested.

*** Do the best you can to work with the legislator(s) schedule when scheduling meetings. It is important to check in and have conversation not just when you are asking for their help, but keep the window of conversation open and thank them for their work. Truly build a relationship with your legislator.*

Don't

- Schedule meetings last-minute.
- Arrive late and unprepared.
- Be rude, aggressive, or disrespectful. Always listen with an open mind, even if you do not see eye to eye.
- Lie and/or manipulate facts.
- Promise what you cannot deliver.
- Be unresponsive or lose contact with your legislator(s) or association staff.

Field Report

Field Reports are a crucial part of the Tennessee Political Coordinator program. Field Reports should be completed upon every meeting with assigned legislator(s). It is also encouraged to complete a Field Report if you write a letter or have a phone call with a legislator, especially if Tennessee REALTORS® interests are the topic of discussion.

How to Complete a Field Report

1. Login to tnrealtors.com
2. Select "Vote, Act, and Invest" menu option
3. Select "REALTOR® Party"
4. Select "Tennessee REALTOR® Political Coordinator"
5. Click "File a Field Report"
6. Complete online Field Report with as much detail and information necessary to relay to the association.

Sample Field Report

Submitted By: _____

Submission Date: _____

Email Address: _____

Legislator(s): _____

Interaction Type (Event, meeting, etc): _____

Interaction Date: _____

Comments: _____

(EXAMPLE TEXT FROM FPC PROGRAM): I attended the USO Pancake Breakfast and Toy Drive for young Marine families at Marine Corp Air Station, Miramar in San Diego. I was invited by the Congressman to sit at his reserved table. After discussion about other topics happening in Washington, D.C., I was able to bring up the topic of Mortgage Interest Deduction. The Congressman was very emphatic that he is against making any changes to this important tax deduction. He totally understands that the Real Estate Market is very fragile. He is the Executor of his recently deceased Mother's estate. He understands where the market is. I spent about 45 minutes talking to him, his wife and their daughter.

Always Remember...

Enjoy being a TNPC! This is a very important role not only for Tennessee REALTORS® but also to the National Association of REALTORS®. Your work as an advocate for 36,000+ Tennessee REALTORS® is greatly valued and appreciated. Don't hesitate to contact the association's Governmental Affairs department with any questions or concerns. Thank you again for your commitment and time volunteering as a Tennessee Political Coordinator.

Contact

Ashley Sugar
REALTOR® Party Manager
(615) 696-6940
ashley.sugar@tnrealtors.com

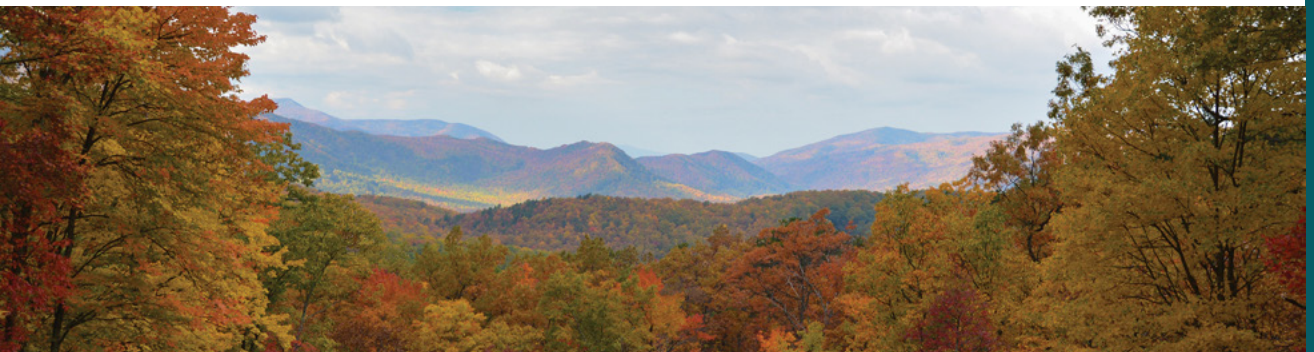
Useful Links

Tennessee REALTORS®
<https://tnrealtors.com>

*All forms for the TNPC program can be found by selecting the **"Vote, Act, and Invest"** menu and then clicking on **"REALTOR® Party"**. Select **"Tennessee Political Coordinator"** where all forms are located.*

Tennessee General Assembly
<http://www.legislature.state.tn.us>

REALTOR® Party
<https://realtorparty.realtor>



HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW IN TENNESSEE



INTRODUCTION

Legislator introduces bill to body by filing with appropriate clerk



NUMBERED BY CHIEF CLERK

1. Chief Clerk (House or Senate) checks to see if it conforms to legislative rules
2. Bill is given a number then distributed per rules
3. TN Constitution requires that to become law, bill must be considered and passed on three different days in each house



REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

Bill remains in committee unless:

A. Bill sponsor goes before committee to explain bill for recommendation of passage upon majority vote of committee

B. If after seven days of no action, bill may be recalled from committee by majority of members in House or Senate (chamber of initial introduction)

C. If no objection bill is placed on committee consent calendar and recommended for passage

D. Bill sponsor does not appear as scheduled to House committee on two occasions, the bill will be returned to Clerk to be held according to Rule 83(2)

E. Bill sponsor does not appear as scheduled before Senate Committee and fails to re-schedule, the bill will be sent back to the Clerk for withdrawal from the Senate

Recommended bills for passage are then reported to Chief Clerk. Bills recommended for passage are automatically referred to scheduling committee: House Committee on Calendar and Rules or the Senate Calendar Committee

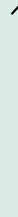
Bills not recommended for passage by committee do not go forward



PASSED ON SECOND CONSIDERATION

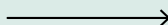
On second day - bill is introduced, read and passed

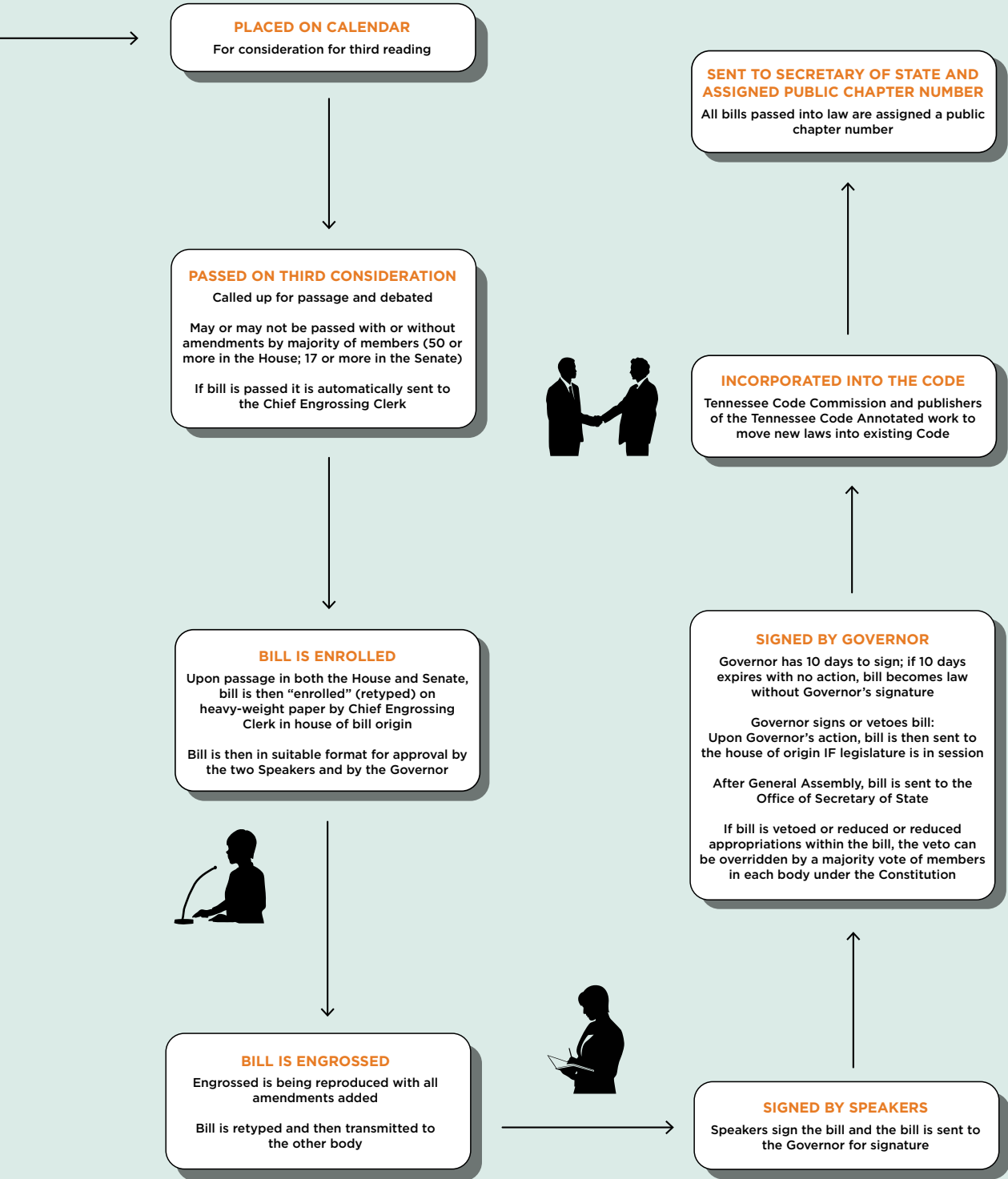
Bill is then referred by the Speaker to appropriate committee



PASSED ON FIRST CONSIDERATION

Introduced - No objection, bill is passed







Ashley Sugar
REALTOR® Party Manager
(615) 696-6940
ashley.sugar@tnrealtors.com