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July 31, 2017

The Honorable James E. Risch
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business
and Entrepreneurship
483 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business
and Entrepreneurship
506 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Shaheen:

On behalf of the more than 1.2 million members of the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), thank you for supporting small businesses in their efforts to improve data security by introducing and cosponsoring S. 1428, the Small Business Cyber Training Act of 2017, scheduled for markup Wednesday. This bipartisan bill would increase access to cybersecurity expertise for small businesses and improve the safety of their data collection and storage methods.

REALTORS® have a long history of strongly supporting efforts to protect consumers' sensitive personal information. The REALTOR® Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice explicitly acknowledge a REALTOR®'s obligation to preserve the confidentiality of personal information provided by clients in the course of any agency or non-agency relationship - both during and after the termination of these business relationships. Protection of client personal information is an important part of the trusted relationship our members enjoy with their clients. In addition, NAR has always had a close relationship with the small business community – many REALTORS® are themselves small business owners, and small businesses make up a large portion of commercial REALTORS®' clientele.

NAR provides resources and training opportunities to members on data privacy and security, stressing the importance of safely collecting and retaining information from clients and safeguarding their own businesses' sensitive information. S. 1428 complements these efforts by expanding existing Small Business Administration (SBA) cyber education programs to train employees at small business development centers, and requiring that at least ten percent certify in cyber strategy counseling. It would also allow the SBA to create new cybersecurity training programs, and to certify existing education programs at the small business development centers. These additional resources from the SBA through the small business development centers – which many real estate professionals and their clients utilize - may further improve cybersecurity practices across the real estate industry.

NAR appreciates your work on the crucial issue of improving access to quality training and resources on data security for small businesses, and supports passage of this important bill. We look forward to working with you to enact this legislation.

Sincerely,

William E. Brown
2017 President, National Association of REALTORS®

U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship



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