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## Realtors Shouldn't Have to Check Their Political Opinions at the Door

If you knew the political viewpoint of your real estate agent, and it differed from your own, would you dump that agent?

Sadly, real estate is such a feast-or-famine business -- mostly famine for the average agent -- that my colleagues tend to keep their politics to themselves, lest they lose a paycheck that puts food on their family's table.

If you think that real estate is a high-income profession, you are not alone, but the statistics speak for themselves. Divide the number of sold listings on the MLS by the number of agents, and you quickly discover that the average agent has fewer than three closings per year. The median is even lower, because about 10% of us probably handle over 90% of the closings!

As you can imagine, for those in

the bottom 90%, withholding one's political viewpoint is more than just good business -- it's a matter of survival.

Those of us in that top 10% can afford to participate in the political process and let potential clients know where we stand on candidates and issues, but, perhaps out of ingrained fear, we still choose the easier path of keeping our opinions to ourselves.

Perhaps we give \$100 to the Realtor Association's "Political Survival Fund" (there's that word "Survival" again), and perhaps we participate in the interview committees which advise the Boards of Directors as to which candidates deserve to receive each Realtor Associations' endorsement and PSF contribution.

But don't expect to find a political yard sign in front of our homes

or a "Business for Obama" (or McCain) sign in our office windows, and certainly don't expect to see bumper stickers on our cars!

Personally, I think it's a shame that so many of us feel the need to play possum politically. For myself, I've never felt the need to hold back my own opinions. Regular readers of this column can recall times when I have "dared" to express a partisan opinion. And, yes, it did feel a little "daring" to me as I wrote those columns.

I'm pleased, however, that for every negative email or comment which I've received as a result of speaking my mind, I have received many more favorable comments, some acknowledging me for my "courage."

But, it shouldn't have to be an act of courage to stand up for what we believe and to share our opinions. If hundreds of thousands of our youth can risk losing their lives for our country, the least I can do is risk losing a paycheck.

### REAL ESTATE TODAY



By JIM SMITH, Realtor®

### This Week's Featured New Listing:

#### Foothills Home on 10 Acres — So Tempting

If I weren't a Realtor who had to live near his work, I'd want to buy a home like this at the end of a long gravel driveway, far from city noise and city lights. Maybe have a couple horses, actually enjoy being snowed in once or twice each winter. That would be the life I'd want. Oh well, I'll have to pass for now, but perhaps *you* would like to buy it! The main house has just over 7,000 square feet on two levels with a 3-car attached garage, and there's a guest house with another 1,500 square feet of living space and a 4-car garage. There's a horse barn, too. Because this is a unique property, the seller paid for a formal appraisal, which is available on request, and priced this home under that appraisal. You'll find a video tour of this home at our website. Call me for a showing.



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