

NAPIA President Ron Reitz Testifies at Kansas State Senate Committee on Financial Institutions and Insurance Hearing

On February 13, Ronald Reitz, CPPA, President of the National Association of Public Insurance Adjusters (NAPIA), spoke before the Kansas State Senate Committee on Financial Institutions and Insurance in Topeka, Kansas, as part of the Committee's hearings concerning Senate Bill No. 138, which amends the Kansas Public Adjuster Licensing Act.

According to Reitz, his participation in this hearing benefited industry professionals, but more importantly, consumers.

"NAPIA applauds the Kansas Legislature's efforts to broaden the current public adjusting licensing law to include claims under personal lines policies," said Reitz. "Our members are working hard to assist consumers and we appreciate this opportunity to talk about our important work before the Committee."

Highlights of Reitz's testimony, which was given on behalf of NAPIA, included the following:

- Public adjusters are experts on property loss adjustment who are retained by policyholders to assist in preparing, filing and adjusting first party insurance claims.
- There is a lack of understanding as to the role of the public adjuster in the insurance profession, the service they provide to the insurance customer, including individuals, and the efforts of NAPIA and its members to continue to professionalize the practice of public adjusting.
- Public adjusters are just like other insurance professionals licensed by and regulated under the insurance departments around the country, and are expected to operate in a manner consistent with, and according to the rules put forth by, the respective legislatures and insurance departments.
- Members of NAPIA, who themselves abide by Rules of Professional Conduct and Ethics and rigorous continuing education requirements, support the strong regulation of public adjusting and have supported, among other things, bills providing for fee caps and other provisions that are in the consumer's best interest.
- The propagation of falsehoods and myths about public adjusters and their presence in a claims situation, inflating claims, creating fraudulent claims, and otherwise operating in an unscrupulous fashion, must end.
- NAPIA strongly supports the effective enforcement of laws and regulations pertaining to public adjusters, just as it hopes that insurance departments aggressively pursue wrongdoing among any class of licensee.
- Mr. Reitz will told the Committee that the stories and suppositions regarding public adjusters, as a group, being something less than fully licensed and regulated insurance professionals working assiduously for their clients, are plainly wrong.
- NAPIA also has become more engaged directly with regulators in areas where there has been significant loss from natural disasters. In New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy included NAPIA outreach to insurance departments to assist in the emergency licensing of public adjusters.

- As of today, 45 states + DC have public adjuster licensing laws. The five states that currently do not license public adjusters include Arkansas, Alabama, Alaska, South Dakota and Wisconsin.
- However, of the 49 states which allow public adjusting, Kansas is the only state which does not allow public adjusters to handle claims under personal lines insurance policies. Senate Bill No. 138 would eliminate that discrepancy.

"NAPIA remains committed to enhancing both public understanding of, and strong regulatory enforcement in, the insurance marketplace," said Reitz. "We will do whatever it can to move forward the dialogue started with this hearing."

Founded in 1951, the National Association of Public Insurance Adjusters promotes the highest standards of professional education, conduct and ethics in the field of public insurance adjusting. The association's 750 plus members are committed to working in the best interest of their client – the policyholder – and to conducting business with honesty and integrity. To learn more about the association, visit www.napia.com.