

## AN ACT

To amend Chapter 40 of Title 43 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to real estate brokers and salespersons, so as to provide for the acceptance of funds in a separate, federally insured account at a financial institution by such persons; to provide for unfair trade practices by real estate brokers and salespersons; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

### SECTION 1.

Chapter 40 of Title 43 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to real estate brokers and salespersons, is amended in Code Section 43-40-20, relating to trust or escrow checking account for real estate business, by revising subsection (a) as follows:

"(a) Each broker who accepts down payments, earnest money deposits, security deposits, rents, association fees, or other trust funds in a real estate brokerage transaction or whose affiliated licensees accept such trust funds shall maintain a separate, federally insured account at a financial institution in this state which shall be designated a trust or escrow account wherein all down payments, earnest money deposits, or other trust funds received by the broker or the broker's affiliated licensees, on behalf of a principal or any other person, shall be deposited. An account so designated and registered with the commission shall not be subject to attachment or garnishment. A broker who does not accept trust funds in real estate brokerage transactions is not required to maintain a designated trust or escrow account; provided, however, that if a broker does not maintain such a trust or escrow account and later receives trust funds in a real estate brokerage transaction, such broker must open the designated trust or escrow account required by this subsection within one business day of the receipt of such trust funds."

### SECTION 2.

Said chapter is further amended in Code Section 43-40-25, relating to unfair trade practices, by revising paragraphs (5) and (29) of subsection (b) as follows:

"(5) Failing to maintain and deposit in a separate, federally insured account at a financial institution all money received by such broker acting in such capacity, or as escrow agent or the temporary custodian of the funds of others, in a real estate transaction unless all parties having an interest in such funds have agreed otherwise in writing;"

"(29) Failing to obtain the written agreement of the parties indicating to whom the broker shall pay any interest earned on trust funds deposited into an interest-bearing account prior to depositing those funds into such account;"

**SECTION 3.**

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.