AN ACT

| RELATING TO LICENSING; CLARIFYING THE DEFINITION OF "BROKER" |
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| AND WHAT ACTIVITIES ARE EXEMPTED FROM BROKER LICENSING; |
| EXTENDING CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS TO BROKERS OVER |
| THE AGE OF SIXTY-FIVE EXCEPT FOR THOSE EXEMPT; PROVIDING FOR |
| FINGERPRINTING AND CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR |
| LICENSE APPLICANTS; ADJUSTING FEES; REMOVING CORPORATIONS, |
| PARTNERSHIPS AND ASSOCIATIONS FROM BROKER LICENSING; ALLOWING |
| FOR AND REGULATING FOREIGN AND NONRESIDENT BROKERS; AMENDING |
| THE PENALTIES FOR UNLICENSED ACTIVITY; LOWERING THE MINIMUM |
| BALANCE REQUIRED IN THE REAL ESTATE RECOVERY FUND; AMENDING |
| AND REPEALING SECTIONS OF THE NMSA 1978. |

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. Section 61-29-2 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1999, Chapter 127, Section 1, as amended) is amended to read:

"61-29-2. DEFINITIONS AND EXCEPTIONS.--

A. As used in Chapter 61, Article 29 NMSA 1978:

(1) "agency relationship" means the fiduciary relationship created solely by an express written agency agreement between a person and a brokerage, authorizing the brokerage to act as an agent for the person according to the scope of authority granted in that express written agreement for real estate services subject to the jurisdiction of the commission;

| 1 | (2) "agent" means the brokerage authorized, |
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| 2 | solely by means of an express written agreement, to act as a |
| 3 | fiduciary for a person and to provide real estate services |
| 4 | that are subject to the jurisdiction of the commission; in |
| 5 | the case of an associate broker, "agent" means the person who |
| 6 | has been authorized to act by that associate broker's |
| 7 | qualifying broker; |
| 8 | (3) "associate broker" means a person who, |
| 9 | for compensation or other valuable consideration, is |
| 10 | associated with or engaged under contract by a qualifying |
| 11 | broker to participate in an activity described in Paragraph |
| 12 | (4) of this subsection or to carry on the qualifying broker's |
| 13 | business as a whole or partial vocation; |
| 14 | (4) "broker" or "qualifying broker" means a |
| 15 | person who for compensation or other consideration from |
| 16 | another: |
| 17 | (a) lists, sells or offers to sell real |
| 18 | estate; buys or offers to buy real estate; or negotiates the |
| 19 | purchase, sale or exchange of real estate or options on real |
| 20 | estate; |
| 21 | (b) is engaged in managing property for |
| 22 | others; |
| 23 | (c) leases, rents or auctions or offers |
| 24 | to lease, rent or auction real estate; |

(d) advertises or makes any

- (e) engages in the business of charging an advance fee or contracting for collection of a fee in connection with a contract under which the broker or qualifying broker undertakes primarily to promote the sale of real estate through its listing in a publication issued primarily for that purpose or for the purpose of referral of information concerning real estate to brokers, qualifying brokers or associate brokers;
- (5) "brokerage" means a licensed qualifying broker and the licensed real estate business represented by the qualifying broker and its affiliated licensees;
- (6) "brokerage relationship" means the legal or contractual relationship between a person and a brokerage in a real estate transaction subject to the jurisdiction of the commission;
- (7) "client" means a buyer, seller, landlord or tenant who has entered into an express written agreement with a brokerage for real estate services subject to the jurisdiction of the commission;
- (8) "commission" means the New Mexico real estate commission;

| 1 | (9) "customer" means a buyer, seller, | | |
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| 2 | landlord or tenant who uses real estate services without | | |
| 3 | entering into an express written agreement with a brokerage | | |
| 4 | subject to the jurisdiction of the commission; | | |
| 5 | (10) "license" means a qualifying broker's | | |
| 6 | license or an associate broker's license issued by the | | |
| 7 | commission; | | |
| 8 | (11) "licensee" means a person holding a | | |
| 9 | valid qualifying broker's license or an associate broker's | | |
| 10 | license subject to the jurisdiction of the commission; | | |
| 11 | (12) "real estate" means land, improvements, | | |
| 12 | leaseholds and other interests in real property that are less | | |
| 13 | than a fee simple ownership interest, whether tangible or | | |
| 14 | intangible; | | |
| 15 | (13) "real estate salesperson" means a | | |
| 16 | person who, for compensation or other valuable consideration, | | |
| 17 | is associated with or engaged under contract by a broker to | | |
| 18 | participate in an activity described in Paragraph (4) of this | | |
| 19 | subsection or to carry on the broker's business as a whole or | | |
| 20 | partial vocation; and | | |
| 21 | (14) "transaction broker" means a qualifying | | |
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ifying broker, associate broker or brokerage that provides real estate services without entering into an agency relationship.

B. A single act of a person in performing or attempting to perform an activity described in Paragraph (4)

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- C. The provisions of Chapter 61, Article 29 NMSA 1978 do not apply to:
- (1) a person who as owner performs any of the activities included in this section with reference to property owned by the person, except when the sale or offering for sale of the property constitutes a subdivision containing one hundred or more parcels;
- employees of a qualifying broker acting on behalf of the owner, with respect to the property owned, if the acts are performed in the regular course of or incident to the management of the property and the investments, except when the sale or offering for sale of the property constitutes a subdivision containing one hundred or more parcels;
- (3) isolated or sporadic transactions not exceeding two transactions annually in which a person acts as attorney-in-fact under a duly executed power of attorney delivered by an owner authorizing the person to finally consummate and to perform under any contract the sale, leasing or exchange of real estate on behalf of the owner;

- (4) transactions in which a person acts as attorney-in-fact under a duly executed power of attorney delivered by an owner related to the attorney-in-fact within the fourth degree of consanguinity or closer, authorizing the person to finally consummate and to perform under any contract for the sale, leasing or exchange of real estate on behalf of the owner;
- (5) the services rendered by an attorney at law in the performance of the attorney's duties as an attorney at law;
- (6) a person acting in the capacity of a receiver, trustee in bankruptcy, administrator or executor, a person selling real estate pursuant to an order of any court or a trustee acting under a trust agreement, deed of trust or will or the regular salaried employee of a trustee;
- (7) the activities of a salaried employee of a governmental agency acting within the scope of employment; or
- (8) persons who deal exclusively in mineral leases or the sale or purchase of mineral rights or royalties in any case in which the fee to the land or the surface rights are in no way involved in the transaction."

1 SECTION 2. Section 61-29-4.1 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 2 1985, Chapter 89, Section 1, as amended) is amended to read: 3 "61-29-4.1. ADDITIONAL POWERS OF COMMISSION--CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS--MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS.--The commission 4 5 shall adopt rules providing for continuing education courses 6 in selling, leasing or managing residential, commercial and industrial property as well as courses in basic real estate 7 law and practice and other courses prescribed by the 8 The regulations shall require that every 9 commission. licensee except licensees who were already exempted from 10 continuing education requirements prior to the effective date 11 of this 2011 act, as a condition of license renewal, 12 successfully complete thirty classroom hours of instruction 13 every three years in courses approved by the commission. 14 15 rules may prescribe areas of specialty or expertise and may require that part of the classroom instruction be devoted to 16 courses in the area of a licensee's specialty or expertise." 17 SECTION 3. Section 61-29-4.4 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 18 2005, Chapter 35, Section 6) is amended to read: 19 20 "61-29-4.4. ADDITIONAL POWERS OF COMMISSION--FINGERPRINTING AND CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND CHECKS .--21 All applicants for licensure as provided for in 22

Chapter 61, Article 29 NMSA 1978 shall:

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(1) be required to provide fingerprints on two fingerprint cards for submission to the federal bureau of $$\,^{\circ}$$ Page 7

investigation to conduct a national criminal history background check and to the department of public safety to conduct a state criminal history check;

- (2) pay the cost of obtaining the fingerprints and criminal history background checks; and
- (3) have the right to inspect or challenge the validity of the records resulting from the background check if the applicant is denied licensure as established by commission rule.
- B. Electronic live scans may be used for conducting criminal history background checks.
- C. Criminal history records obtained by the commission pursuant to the provisions of this section are confidential. The commission is authorized to use criminal history records obtained from the federal bureau of investigation and the department of public safety to conduct background checks on applicants for certification as provided for in Chapter 61, Article 29 NMSA 1978.
- D. Criminal history records obtained by the commission pursuant to the provisions of this section shall not be used for any purpose other than conducting background checks. Criminal history records obtained pursuant to the provisions of this section and the information contained in those records shall not be released or disclosed to any other person or agency, except pursuant to a court order or with

the written consent of the person who is the subject of the records.

E. A person who releases or discloses the criminal history records or information contained in those records in violation of the provisions of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be sentenced pursuant to the provisions of Section 31-19-1 NMSA 1978."

SECTION 4. Section 61-29-8 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1959, Chapter 226, Section 7, as amended) is amended to read:

"61-29-8. LICENSE FEES--DISPOSITION.--

A. The following fees shall be established and charged by the commission and paid into the real estate commission fund:

- (1) for each examination, a fee established by the commission based on competitive bids for examination services submitted to the commission in response to a commission request for proposals, not to exceed ninety-five dollars (\$95.00);
- (2) for each qualifying broker's license
 issued, a fee not to exceed two hundred seventy dollars
 (\$270) and for each renewal thereof, a fee not to exceed two hundred seventy dollars (\$270);
- (3) for each associate broker's license issued, a fee not to exceed two hundred seventy dollars (\$270) and for each renewal thereof, a fee not to exceed two

hundred seventy dollars (\$270);

- (4) subject to the provisions of Paragraph (10) of this subsection, for each change of place of business or change of employer or contractual associate, a transfer fee not to exceed twenty dollars (\$20.00);
- (5) for each duplicate license, where the license is lost or destroyed and affidavit is made thereof, a fee not to exceed twenty dollars (\$20.00);
- (6) for each license history, a fee not to exceed twenty-five dollars (\$25.00);
- (7) for copying of documents by the commission, a fee not to exceed one dollar (\$1.00) per copy;
- (8) for each license law and rules booklet, a fee not to exceed ten dollars (\$10.00) per booklet;
- (9) for each hard copy or electronic list of licensed associate brokers and qualifying brokers, a fee not to exceed actual costs up to fifty dollars (\$50.00);
- associate broker because of change of address of the qualifying broker's office or death of the qualifying broker when a successor qualifying broker is replacing the decedent and the associate broker remains in the office or because of a change of name of the office or the entity of the qualifying broker, a fee in an amount not to exceed twenty dollars (\$20.00) to be paid by the qualifying broker or

hundred dollars (\$200);

- (11) for each application to the commission to become an approved sponsor of prelicensing and continuing education courses, a fee not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500) and for each renewal thereof, a fee not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500);
- (12) for each application to the commission to become an approved instructor of prelicensing and continuing education courses, a fee not to exceed seventy dollars (\$70.00) per course; and
- (13) for each application to the commission to renew certification as a commission-approved instructor, a fee not to exceed one hundred dollars (\$100).
- B. All fees set by the commission shall be set by rule and only after all requirements have been met as prescribed by Chapter 61, Article 29 NMSA 1978. Any changes or amendments to the rules shall be filed in accordance with the State Rules Act.
- C. The commission shall deposit all money received by it from fees in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 61, Article 29 NMSA 1978 with the state treasurer, who shall

keep that money in a separate fund to be known as the "real estate commission fund", and money so deposited in that fund is appropriated to the commission for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of Section 61-29-4 NMSA 1978 or to maintain the real estate recovery fund as required by the Real Estate Recovery Fund Act and shall be paid out of the fund upon the vouchers of the executive secretary of the commission or the executive secretary's designee; provided that the total fees and charges collected and paid into the state treasury and any money so deposited shall be expended only for the purposes authorized by Chapter 61, Article 29

SECTION 5. Section 61-29-9 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1959, Chapter 226, Section 8, as amended) is amended to read:

"61-29-9. QUALIFICATIONS FOR LICENSE.--

A. Licenses shall be granted only to persons who meet the requirements for licensure prescribed by law and are deemed by the commission to be of good repute and competent to transact the business of a qualifying broker or an associate broker in a manner that safeguards the interests of the public.

B. An applicant for a qualifying broker's license or an associate broker's license shall be a legal resident of the United States and have reached the age of majority. Each applicant for a qualifying broker's license or an associate

- (1) furnish the commission with a certificate that the applicant has completed successfully ninety classroom hours of instruction in basic real estate courses approved by the commission, thirty hours of which shall have been a broker basics course; or
- (2) furnish the commission with a certificate that the applicant is a duly licensed real estate broker in good standing in another state; provided that the applicant has successfully completed ninety classroom hours of instruction in basic real estate courses approved by the commission, thirty hours of which shall have been a broker basics course.
- c. An applicant for a qualifying broker's license shall have been actively engaged in the real estate business as an associate broker or real estate salesperson for at least two of the last five years immediately preceding application for a qualifying broker's license and furnish the commission proof that the applicant has completed successfully one hundred twenty hours of prelicensing courses, including a broker basics course, approved by the commission.
- D. A licensee holding a current real estate salesperson's license on the effective date of this 2005 act

shall automatically qualify for an associate broker's license without any additional requirements. However, to be eligible to apply for a qualifying broker's license, a real estate salesperson obtaining an associate broker's license pursuant to this subsection shall, in addition to meeting all other requirements for a qualifying broker's license, pass a real estate broker's examination approved by the commission.

E. The commission shall require the information it deems necessary from every applicant to determine that applicant's honesty, trustworthiness and competency."

SECTION 6. Section 61-29-12 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1959, Chapter 226, Section 11, as amended) is amended to read:

"61-29-12. REFUSAL, SUSPENSION OR REVOCATION OF LICENSE FOR CAUSES ENUMERATED.--

A. The commission may refuse to issue a license or may suspend, revoke, limit or condition a license if the applicant or licensee has by false or fraudulent representations obtained a license or, in performing or attempting to perform any of the actions specified in Chapter 61, Article 29 NMSA 1978, an applicant or licensee has:

- (1) made a substantial misrepresentation;
- (2) pursued a continued and flagrant course of misrepresentation; made false promises through agents, salespersons, advertising or otherwise; or used any trade name or insignia of membership in any real estate

organization of which the licensee is not a member;

(3) paid or received a rebate, profit, compensation or commission to or from any unlicensed person, except the licensee's principal or other party to the transaction, and then only with that principal's written consent;

- (4) represented or attempted to represent a qualifying broker other than a qualifying broker with whom the licensee is associated without the express knowledge and consent of that qualifying broker;
- (5) failed, within a reasonable time, to account for or to remit any money coming into the licensee's possession that belongs to others, commingled funds of others with the licensee's own or failed to keep funds of others in an escrow or trustee account or failed to furnish legible copies of all listing and sales contracts to all parties executing them;
- (6) been convicted in any court of competent jurisdiction of a felony or any offense involving moral turpitude;
- (7) employed or compensated, directly or indirectly, a person for performing any of the acts regulated by Chapter 61, Article 29 NMSA 1978 who is not a licensed qualifying broker or an associate broker; provided, however, that a qualifying broker may pay a commission to a qualifying

broker of another state as provided in Section 61-29-16.1 NMSA 1978;

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(8) failed, if a qualifying broker, to place as soon after receipt as is practicably possible, after securing signatures of all parties to the transaction, any deposit money or other money received by the qualifying broker in a real estate transaction in a custodial, trust or escrow account, maintained by the qualifying broker in a bank or savings and loan institution or title company authorized to do business in this state, in which the funds shall be kept until the transaction is consummated or otherwise terminated, at which time a full accounting of the funds shall be made by the qualifying broker. Records relative to the deposit, maintenance and withdrawal of the funds shall contain information as may be prescribed by the rules of the Nothing in this paragraph prohibits a qualifying commission. broker from depositing nontrust funds in an amount not to exceed the required minimum balance in each trust account so as to meet the minimum balance requirements of the bank necessary to maintain the account and avoid charges. minimum balance deposit shall not be considered commingling and shall not be subject to levy, attachment or garnishment. This paragraph does not prohibit a qualifying broker from depositing any deposit money or other money received by the qualifying broker in a real estate transaction with another

cooperating broker who shall in turn comply with this paragraph;

- (9) failed, if an associate broker, to place as soon after receipt as is practicably possible in the custody of the associate broker's qualifying broker, after securing signatures of all parties to the transaction, any deposit money or other money entrusted to the associate broker by any person dealing with the associate broker as the representative of the qualifying broker;
- (10) violated a provision of Chapter 61,
 Article 29 NMSA 1978 or a rule promulgated by the commission;
- or different character from that specified in this subsection, that is related to dealings as a qualifying broker or an associate broker and that constitutes or demonstrates bad faith, incompetency, untrustworthiness, impropriety, fraud, dishonesty, negligence or any unlawful act; or
- (12) been the subject of disciplinary action as a licensee while licensed to practice real estate in another jurisdiction, territory or possession of the United States or another country.
- B. An unlawful act or violation of Chapter 61,
 Article 29 NMSA 1978 by an associate broker, employee,
 partner or associate of a qualifying broker shall not be

cause for the revocation of a license of the qualifying broker unless it appears to the satisfaction of the commission that the qualifying broker had guilty knowledge of the unlawful act or violation."

SECTION 7. Section 61-29-16.1 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 2005, Chapter 35, Section 15) is amended to read:

"61-29-16.1. FOREIGN BROKERS--NONRESIDENT LICENSEES.--

A. A foreign associate broker or qualifying broker currently licensed by another state or licensing jurisdiction other than New Mexico may engage in real estate activity in New Mexico as a foreign broker; provided that the foreign broker enters into a transaction-specific written agreement with a New Mexico licensed qualifying broker prior to commencing such real estate activity. The foreign broker shall comply with all New Mexico laws, including those acts regulated by Chapter 61, Article 29 NMSA 1978.

B. An associate broker or qualifying broker with a license application address that is not within the state of New Mexico shall file with the commission an irrevocable consent that lawsuits and actions may be commenced against the associate broker or qualifying broker in the proper court of any county of this state in which a cause of action may arise or in which the plaintiff may reside, by service on the commission of any process or pleadings authorized by the laws

of this state, the consent stipulating and agreeing that such service of process or pleadings on the commission is as valid and binding as if personal service had been made upon the associate broker or qualifying broker in New Mexico. Service of process or pleadings shall be served in duplicate upon the commission; one shall be filed in the office of the commission and the other immediately forwarded by certified mail to the main office of the associate broker or qualifying broker against whom the process or pleadings are directed."

SECTION 8. Section 61-29-17 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1965, Chapter 304, Section 8, as amended) is amended to read:

"61-29-17. PENALTY--INJUNCTIVE RELIEF.--

A. Any person who violates any provision of Chapter 61, Article 29 NMSA 1978 is guilty of a fourth degree felony and shall be punished by a fine of not more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000) or by imprisonment for a definite term of eighteen months, or both.

B. In the event any person has engaged or proposes to engage in any act or practice violative of a provision of Chapter 61, Article 29 NMSA 1978, the attorney general or the district attorney of the judicial district in which the person resides or the judicial district in which the violation has occurred or will occur shall, upon application of the commission, maintain an action in the name of the state to prosecute the violation or to enjoin the proposed

act or practice.

C. In any action brought under Subsection B of this section, if the court finds that a person is engaged or has willfully engaged in any act or practice violative of a provision of Sections 61-29-1 through 61-29-18 NMSA 1978, the attorney general or the district attorney of the judicial district in which the person resides or the judicial district in which the violation has occurred or is occurring shall, upon petition to the court, recover on behalf of the state a civil penalty not exceeding five thousand dollars (\$5,000) per violation and attorney fees and costs."

SECTION 9. Section 61-29-17.2 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 2001, Chapter 163, Section 11) is amended to read:

"61-29-17.2. UNLICENSED ACTIVITY--CIVIL PENALTY-ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.--The commission may impose a civil
penalty on any person who is found, through a court or
administrative proceeding, to have acted in violation of
Chapter 61, Article 29 NMSA 1978 in an amount not to exceed
one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for each violation or, if the
commission can so determine, in the amount of the total
commissions received by the person for the unlicensed
activity. The commission may assess administrative costs for
any investigation and administrative or other proceedings
against any such person. Any money collected by the
commission under the provisions of this section shall be

deposited into the real estate recovery fund."

SECTION 10. Section 61-29-22 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1980, Chapter 82, Section 3, as amended) is amended to read:
"61-29-22. ADDITIONAL FEES.--

- A. The commission shall collect an annual fee not in excess of ten dollars (\$10.00) from each real estate licensee prior to the issuance of the next license.
- B. The commission shall collect from each successful applicant for an original real estate license, in addition to the original license fee, a fee not in excess of ten dollars (\$10.00).
- Shall be credited to the real estate recovery fund. The amount of the real estate recovery fund shall be maintained at one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000). If the real estate recovery fund falls below this amount, the commission shall have authority to adjust the annual amount of additional fees to be charged licensees or to draw on the real estate commission fund in order to maintain the fund level as required in this section. If on July 1 of any year, the balance in the fund exceeds four hundred thousand dollars (\$400,000), the amount over four hundred thousand dollars (\$400,000) shall be transferred to the real estate commission fund to be used for the purposes of carrying out the provisions of Chapter 61, Article 29 NMSA 1978."

| 1 | SECTION 11 DEDEATSection 61 20 10 NMSA 1070 /hoine | |
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| | SECTION 11. REPEALSection 61-29-19 NMSA 1978 (being | |
| 2 | Laws 1978, Chapter 203, Section 2, as amended) is repealed. | |
| 3 | SECTION 12. EFFECTIVE DATEThe effective date of the | |
| 4 | provisions of this act is July 1, 2011 | |
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