CONSUMER POLICY CENTER

NEWS RELEASE

October 13, 2026

Contact: Stephen Brobeck
sbrobeck@consumerpolicy.org

ALL BIG REAL ESTATE PORTALS PROVIDE CONSUMERS WITH MOST OF THE SAME INFORMATION ABOUT THE SAME PROPERTY LISTINGS BUT DIFFERENCES EXIST

CPC REPORT COMPARES ZILLOW, REALTOR.COM, REDFIN, AND HOMES.COM

Washington, D.C. – A new report from the Consumer Policy Center (CPC) – Home Search I: Comparing the Big Real Estate Portals – reveals that Zillow, Realtor.com, Redfin, and Homes.com all provide invaluable information to home buyers and sellers about hundreds of thousands of properties for sale. This information is based on data collected by hundreds of local and regional multiple listing services (MLSs) to which the portals currently have access.

"Somewhat to our surprise, we found that the four portals to a large extent make the same information about the same properties available to home buyers and sellers," said Stephen Brobeck, a CPC senior fellow and the report's author. "However, there are some differences among the portals that buyers especially should take note of before they begin their property search," he added.

- With one notable exception, Zillow and Realtor.com were somewhat more likely to include properties in community listings than were Homes.com and Redfin.
- Redfin, on the other hand, was the only portal that listed Coming Soon properties being brokered by Compass and its affiliated companies. In a total sample of 500, there were 14 of these properties, which Redfin termed Early Access.
- Realtor.com was the only portal that prominently listed "contingent" and "pending" properties that were under contract. Since nearly 15 percent of these sales fall through, buyers may not wish to ignore the listings.
- Realtor.com also includes a deceptive "contact" button which does not make it clear that the contact is with an unknown buyer agent, not the listing agent.
- Except for Compass-related Coming Soon listings (identified by Redfin as Early Access) and for some listings in the Chicago area, information on days on market (DOM) is available on almost all listings. Sometimes, however, DOM is a deceptively low number on one or two portals because of relisting. Buyers can check on the accuracy of this statistic by looking at the property listing on all four portals, recognizing that the highest number is probably the most accurate.

“Especially when they are searching for properties within a limited community, buyers would be wise to look at listings on all four portals,” noted CPC’s Brobeck. “Buyers also should consider checking Early Access, contingent, and pending listings,” he added.

The research examined 500 residential properties in 21 communities located in or near ten major metropolitan areas. The four portals recognized, and allowed property searches, in all of the 21 areas.

The portals, especially Zillow, are now embroiled in controversies about gaining access to and listing properties for sale. If portals were denied information about listings, so would home buyers and sellers.“Our fear is that we would return to the pre-portal days when consumers were highly dependent on agents for information about listings,” said the CPC’s Brobeck. “This would represent a huge loss for consumers that would erode their confidence in the housing market,” he added.

The author will address this and related issues in a second and complementary Home Search report.

The Consumer Policy Center (CPC), launched in early 2025, is a think tank whose experts undertake research and commentary to advance the consumer interest. Many of these experts have led consumer or government organizations, held university appointments, and published scholarly research. The CPC does not take positions on policy issues; the analysis and views in CPC publications are those of their authors.