



SENATOR BOB DUFF

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Testimony by Senator Bob Duff
Support for:

SB No. 706 – AN ACT CONCERNING CONDOMINIUMS AND OTHER COMMON INTEREST COMMUNITIES AND ESTABLISHING AN OFFICE OF CONDOMINIUM OMBUDSMAN.

Wednesday, March 19, 2008

To: The Hon. Andrew McDonald, Co-Chairman, The Hon. Michael Lawlor, Co-Chairman, The Hon. Mary Ann Handley, Vice Chairman, The Hon. Gerald Fox, Vice Chairman, The Hon. John Kissel, Ranking Member, The Hon. Arthur O'Neill, Ranking Member and the members of the Judiciary Committee:

I would like to thank the members of the Judiciary Committee for hearing **Senate Bill 706, AN ACT CONCERNING CONDOMINIUMS AND OTHER COMMON INTEREST COMMUNITIES AND ESTABLISHING AN OFFICE OF CONDOMINIUM OMBUDSMAN.**

During the 2007 Legislative Session, Senator McDonald, Rep. Lawlor and I worked diligently to create **Senate Bill 1089, AN ACT CONCERNING THE RELEASE, SALE AND ACCURACY OF CONVICTION INFORMATION, THE ISSUANCE OF A REARREST WARRANT OR CAPIAS FOR FAILURE TO APPEAR, THE DUTIES OF BOARDS OF CONDOMINIUMS AND OTHER COMMON INTEREST COMMUNITIES, AND THE DEFINITION OF COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION MANAGER.** The bill, which passed unanimously in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, expanded the rights of condominium and common interest community owners by specifically addressing certain policies and procedures relating to association board activity. However, my office continues to receive numerous complaints from constituents who tell horror stories of association boards run by unscrupulous directors. Clearly, something more needs to be done.

Through a multitude of proposals, **Senate Bill 706** will expand the rights of unit owners by providing a mean in which they can voice their concerns. The bill will also help to create a more cohesive relationship between the association board and the community which it serves.

The bill establishes an Office of Ombudsman within the Department of Consumer Protection. The Condominium Ombudsman will represent the interests of unit owners, allowing the Ombudsman to serve as an outlet for those wishing to express concerns. Under the Condominium Ombudsman, complaints will be investigated, referred, and resolved; laws and information will be analyzed and published; and upon request of unit owners, the election of board members will be monitored, thereby helping to avoid costly civil routes among those involved.

The bill also helps to promote a more cohesive relationship between the association board and unit owners by amending the types of records the association shall maintain and provide. With access to board activity records such as financial information, board meeting minutes, and voting records, faith and community-awareness may be restored among unit owners.

As co-sponsor of **Senate Bill 706**, and an advocate for condominium and common interest community owners, I believe this bill will help to eliminate lingering discrepancies found in under regulated board associations. With strong encouragement, I implore the committee to favorably support this bill.