

Testimony of Pamela Bowman,

Before the Judiciary Committee, Friday, March 25, 2011, 11:00 a.m.

H.B. 6620 AN ACT CONCERNING CONDOMINIUMS AND COMMON INTEREST OWNERSHIP COMMUNITIES

My Name is Pamela Bowman, I am Regional Manager and Director of Marketing for Prime Touch Services, a company that has been doing business with Condominium Communities for 30 years, personally I have been involved with community associations for 24 years, In the mid to late 90's I sat on the Board of Directors as Vice President in the community of which I currently reside in Granby, CT, I then became a portfolio property manager in Hartford County and received my CMCA, Certified Manager of Community Associations, I have moved onto the current position I hold today and continue with my education credits remaining a Certified Manager.

I am a volunteer with the CT- Community Association Institute program committee and my company Prime Touch Services sponsors Community Association Events throughout New England, bringing education to community board members, unit owners and vendors. I feel very strongly about education, knowledge is power, knowledge is leadership.

Being a part of community associations in so many different ways, it only makes sense for me to be a part of the development of well governed and managed communities. Having said that, I am in opposition of the implementation of the Ombudsman in the State of Connecticut,

To begin this proposal for the Ombudsman does not allow the recent laws enacted in July of 2010 to actually have a chance to work. These laws allow, across the board, a public process to be used, which in reality is nothing other than the way we govern most town and city municipalities, business is conducted in a public forum and the public has a right to their say, however timed and in its place.

CAI has been aggressively educating Board Members and Property Managers of their roles and responsibilities with these new laws and conduct, but I ask you, where in there lies the responsibility of the unit owner to educate themselves about community living.

CAI events are open to any unit owner as a member or non member of the organization. We encourage people to understand the process and allow it to work. Adding an Ombudsman to the State of Connecticut speaks for a very SMALL minority of the community and homeowner associations in the state.

I see the true and unfortunate part of the Ombudsman Office allowing the dispute resolution process to be removed from community governance. Living in community means living with your neighbors and understanding the world of the other, through

education and the professional credentialing of managers this process will encourage boards and residents to engage in good governance practices.

If the Ombudsman is passed every unit owner in the State of Connecticut will be forced to bare the annual expense, and plus some, if a subject were too be brought to the office, and what for? The small minority that thinks it is necessary.

In my opinion budget expenses and common fees are what these associations struggle with annually and sometimes monthly. This past winter was no exception, unforeseen expenses somehow have to be paid for; Robbing Peter to Pay Paul.

I can tell you as a contractor that has the unfortunate task of delivering news of the cost of repair and maintenance to Associations, there is no more money from the budget and there is no more money that the unit owner wants to give up.

The result of artificially leaving common fees low and budgeting expenses at levels lower than actual costs is where their money needs to be spent not in an office for the minority when statistics say that 90% of unit owners say that Board members strive to serve in the best interests of their Communities. Give them a chance.

Thank you.