

Tsarkov, Alex

From: David K [davidk1233@comcast.net]
Sent: Wednesday, March 23, 2011 10:51 PM
To: Tsarkov, Alex
Subject: From David Kelman3: Written Testimony is Support of HB6620, HB1205, HB1208 Condo Bills; For Public Hearing 3/25/11

Written Testimony is Support of HB6620, HB1205 and HB1208; For Public Hearing 3/25/11

Connecticut Condo Owners Coalition supports proposed legislation

Written by The Ridgefield Press
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A grassroots organization entitled the Connecticut Condo Owners Coalition (CCOC) has been formed to address the many issues facing owners of condominiums and common interest properties in Connecticut.

There currently are approximately 250,000 owners of condominiums in Connecticut, including more than 900 in Ridgefield.

The Attorney General's office has received hundreds of complaints from owners about problems with the association boards and property management companies that run these communities.

For years, owners have complained about abuses of power, incompetent management, unfair treatment, even fraud and corruption. The only recourse owners have is to sue, which, in many cases is cost prohibitive for the homeowner.

When sued, the association often hires an attorney whose fees are divided among association members; those owners who sue their associations pay legal fees twice.

Connecticut statutes and some homeowner association bylaws are often too vague and not enforceable leaving owners with no way to enforce their rights short of going to court.

As of July 1, 2010, the laws governing condos have changed giving owners of condos much greater say in the management of their real estate investments and the social environments in which they live. Many boards and managers either are unfamiliar with these changes or are ignoring them, said Alan P. Fishman, CCOC spokesman.

"As a result, several condo owners came together to form the CCOC in an effort to pool their efforts and to work with the Connecticut legislature to pass laws that will further protect the investments of condo owners and will resolve the conflicts many have with their boards and management companies," Mr. Fishman said.

"At the moment there are several condo bills being considered that focus on everything from more transparent financial reporting to how members are elected to serve on condo boards, to the establishment of an Office of Ombudsman where complaints regarding condo association boards and property managers can be investigated and resolved without the huge expense and time-consuming need to go to court."

Mr. Fishman said, "There is also legislation being proposed that addresses how management companies relate to condo boards, their qualifications and training to provide advice on both maintenance and governance of these facilities, as well as whether or not bids are sought on insurance policies.

"This is an important time for condo owners.," he said. "Keeping owners informed of their rights and the

legislation that is being proposed that will affect them remains the focus of the Connecticut Condo Owners Coalition.”

More than 500 unit owners have contacted either the State of Connecticut Attorney General's Office or the Department of Consumer Protection to voice concern about common interest ownership issues, only to be told these agencies cannot assist them, Mr. Fishman said. “Unit owners band together through the coalition, keep informed about relevant proposed legislation, and contact legislators in support of bills that help protect all condo owners statewide.

“All unit owners are welcome as members of the Connecticut Condo Owners Coalition, and membership is free. Hundreds of homeowners from 95 cities and towns across Connecticut comprise the organization’s membership.

For more information or to join the Connecticut Condo Owners Coalition, e-mail ctcondoowners@yahoo.com

David Kelman
89 Shadow La
West Hartford, CT