

Testimony in support of the passage of

HB 5511 – an act concerning the budget, special assessments and assignment of future income approval process in common interest ownership communities.

Proposed to the Joint Judiciary Committee
Co-Chairs Senator Coleman and Representative Fox

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Honored Senators and Representatives of the Connecticut General Assembly, I hope the following will give you reasons to support this bill: without subsection (e)

Heritage Village is a Pre-1984 Association of 24 separate condominiums totally 2,580 units. Heritage Village Master Association (H.V.M.A.) is an early 1970's version of today's management company. Our Condominium Declarations and By-Laws cede too much power to the H.V.M.A., and would be very difficult to change by majority vote in each of the 24 condominiums. An increasing budget of over 16.5 million dollars is presented by the H.V.M.A. to our 24 Trustees for approval each year. Contracts are signed by the H.V.M.A., and those contracts are not made public to the unit owners. Our controller, an accountant, is hired by the Village Manager, and is not required by state law to be a CPA. Also, our maintenance workers are members of the Teamsters Union.

In newer condominiums, the budget is presented by the board of directors to the management company. Contracts are signed by the president of the board and are publicly available to unit owners.

As a senior community, Heritage Village is in a state of crisis: 135 units in various stages of foreclosure; many vacancies; many renters; many owners in nursing homes; many deaths; and many units in probate. Those unit owners usually never cast a vote, so they are counted as a "yes" vote. It then becomes very difficult to overturn a budget.

The H.V.M.A. wants a 3.5% increase each year for the next ten years, which would amount to a 40% total increase ten years from now. I myself am paying over \$600 a month for maintenance, which does not include electricity, heat, water, or real estate taxes. We need this bill to pass to regain control over the H.V.M.A. The right to vote down our budget by majority of votes cast will keep our costs in check and improve efficiency.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth B. Silver