

CONNECTICUT MANUFACTURED HOME OWNERS ALLIANCE

A voice for mobile home park residents in Connecticut
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April 7, 2013

To: Members of the Judiciary Committee
From: Art Mazeau, President, Connecticut Manufactured Home Owners Alliance
Re: H.B. 6661 - Payment into escrow in order to defend an eviction

On behalf of the residents of mobile manufactured home parks in Connecticut, **I strongly urge you to reject H.B. 6661.** The bill will cause great harm to park residents and will discourage them from even coming to court to defend themselves in an eviction. **Please do NOT approve this bill.**

The Connecticut Manufactured Home Owners Alliance is a statewide organization, created in 1991, which represents residents of mobile home parks throughout Connecticut. There are about 10,000 Connecticut households that live in mobile home parks. We are tenants, because we rent the land on which our mobile homes sit, but we are also homeowners who own our own mobile homes. Although mobile homes are a relatively affordable form of housing, they are not inexpensive and many of us have invested thousands of dollars -- sometimes our entire life savings - to buy these homes, which will lose most of their value if we are evicted from a park. Many of us are older or retired and would be forced into other kinds of living arrangements -- even nursing homes -- if we have to relocate.

Many of us have lived at the same location for decades. We are proud to be homeowners, and very many of us can be proud that we have long since paid off the mortgage on our homes. Some tenants are in mobile homes because of lesser or fixed incomes, but for others it was a choice to avoid a 30 year mortgage and be able to still live in our own homes. I too am a mobile home park resident, and I have lived in the same park for the past 38 years. As a long term resident, I have many friends that have also lived in the same park as my neighbors for more than 20 or 30 years. We are not transients looking for a free ride. We have much more at stake if we were to face or lose an eviction. We take a chance that we would lose everything we have worked years for.

Nobody ever wants to have to face an eviction. As homeowners, mobile home park residents are usually very good and reliable tenants. But conflicts can sometimes arise. A recent eviction of a homeowner went all the way to the Connecticut Supreme Court over a dispute about a \$30 per month surcharge. Sometimes they do not understand the implications of court papers. Sometimes they become sick or are hospitalized, as can happen to older people. Sometimes residents temporarily come upon hard financial times. If there is a problem that leads to an eviction case, defending the case in court is really the only way that they can try to work something out that will prevent their eviction.

H.B. 6661, however, is primarily a way to create unnecessary obstacles for park residents to defend themselves in court. It is not necessary to protect park owners, because the eviction case will be dealt with by the court within a couple of weeks. In fact, park owners who want residents to make payments can already make them do it under our present laws, so this bill can't be about making payments. It is about keeping people from being able to make a defense. It is also about making people not want to go to court. The more conditions you put on going to court, more likely that people will not respond to the court papers.

Park residents have worked hard to be able to afford a mobile home, and we take care of our property. No one ever wants to face eviction. Please don't make things even harder than they are by passing a law that puts our property at risk. Please reject this bill. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Arthur Mazeau, President