

TESTIMONY OF BERNADETTE FERRY, GLEN OAKS' CONDOMINIUMS

BEFORE THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

MARCH 24, 2014

Good afternoon, Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Bernadette Ferry, and I am a resident of Glen Oaks Condominiums in Newington who served for two years on the Glen Oaks Master Board. I am here today to add my comments regarding Section 2 of Senate Bill 457 on voting by common interest communities.

As a former New Section Director (officer) and elected Representative to the Glen Oaks' Master Board Association, I have personally witnessed the effect of the "weighted vote" wielded by the Glen Oaks' New Section. As the newest member of the Master Board at the time of my election, I was appalled to learn that my role was that of ultimate decision-maker and "dictator." For example, because I held the "majority vote," even in instances where the directors from all the other six associations voted "no" on a motion, but I voted "yes", my vote determined the outcome each time. If I was unable to show up for a meeting, there was no quorum, and therefore a meeting of the Master Board could not be held. In essence, the person who is the New Section's Representative to the Glen Oaks Master Board controls the entire voting process and basically holds the other six associations "hostage." The current "weighted voting" allows a single individual to determine how the community is run, what items will be paid for, whether budgets can pass, which contractors are selected, and even when, or if, meetings of the Master Association can take place.

I find this to be a fundamental flaw in the ability to equally and fairly represent the individual associations and unit owners throughout the complex for the betterment of the entire Glen Oaks community. To allow one person (as New Section's Representative to the Master Board) to wield such

tight control over all 462 units is unfair to the entire community. An individual can be elected to that position based on proxies and a small number of supporters. This should not be deemed as endowing that person with the ability to know the mindset of 326 diverse people living in the Association represented as he or she votes on a wide array of items over the ensuing 12 months that ultimately impact the entire community of 462 units. Limiting those who are elected to the Master Board to a single vote per association represented would ensure a more equitable distribution of community resources and stop the current abuse of power. It is my belief that the “weighted vote” needs to be removed from any existing condominium community’s legal and recorded declarations and bylaws to allow a more equitable and fair representation of all unit owners. Thank you.