

Sent: Friday, March 21, 2014 6:14 PM
To: Jud Testimony
Subject: Please Support HB #5590

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am writing in support of HB #5590. As a long time (over 30 years) resident of a condo, I can attest to the fact that there is a great need for a mechanism, other than through private lawsuits, by which condo owners can obtain help with disputes they have with their associations. These non-stock corporations are run by untrained, inexperienced volunteers who, too often abuse their power and waste community resources while failing to fulfill their fiduciary responsibility to the association members.

For many—especially older, single women, condos are not what they promise. They are sold as places to live in where one can enjoy the benefits of homeownership while paying for the convenience of an apartment. Nothing could be farther from the truth. A few years ago I helped found a grass roots organization called, the Connecticut Condo Owners Coalition (CCOC). Through that experience I heard hundreds of horror stories of property being allowed to deteriorate, harassment of owners and unlawful conduct by both condo boards and management companies.

We have good laws on the books in the form of The Common Interest Ownership Act (CIOA), but as it now stands without the Office of Ombudsman we tried to get established, there is no way to enforce that law. The Community Association Institute (CAI) has paid lobbyists who have thwarted all efforts by owners to level the playing field between owners and boards. For many owners, their lives in their condo communities are a living hell—one from which they can't escape. Given that many are elderly and have only the investments they have poured into buying their condos, they have no way of resolving the disputes they have with their boards and associations.

While this bill offers little in the way of teeth to help owners, it is at least a third party to whom they can go. It is worth trying and hopefully, someday it will lead to something even better that actually can help condo owners....In the meantime this is better than nothing.

Thank you,

Very truly yours,
Ann Diamond
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New Haven, CT 06511