

Testimony regarding HB 3007

My name is Patricia Schwoch. I have been involved in manufactured homes in many ways in the last 35 years. We have lived in 3 mobile homoparks in the state. My husband and I have served as officers in the state wide organization of OSTA (Oregon State Tenants Association). I have experience in working with residents in all aspects of residential living. Early in my experience of working on the problems of living in a manufactured home park Frank Burleson, who was a long time advocate and I were in the capitol, in then Senator Kennemers committee, where the landlords were in a hearing regarding tenant issues and many of them mobile/manufactured home legislation. It was not good and we were not included in any efforts to write the legislation. When they finished testimony we asked to address the group and when we finished our testimony the Senator informed the landlords group that they were not to come before any hearing in the capitol that effected manufactured home residents without including the tenants. The next year the landlords started a group of mobile home owners and park owners. It wasn't the easiest group to work with but we worked to trust each other and passed some very good legislation that worked for both groups. We have done legislation with that group each legislative session for many years. The stumbling block for two sessions has been 3007, the residents right to make an offer if the landlord decides to offer the park for sale. If the owner gets an unsolicited offer he is not required to offer the park to the residents.

I worked right from the start with the residents to purchase Springlake in Scapose, which they managed to do in 2004. This park is one of the nicer parks in the state and the residents are happy that they are owners.

Residents tried to buy our park, Nut Tree Ranch in Newberg. We were unable to get the owner to sell the park to us even though we had every home in the park in agreements to purchase. We had two problems, the owner gifted the park to a college in Seattle and made the statement that she would not sell to us, something about heathens. I found that interesting since she had been accepting our rents for many years. We managed to get her into court but we were unable to force her hand. As it happens we have a very good owner now and she, unlike so many owners, does not raise the rent every year because she can. She is an exceptional owner.

Most of us would like to own our parks and there is now an effort to do just that. I have recently been privy to the emails and testimony regarding HB 3007, and I am thoroughly convinced that the only reason the landlords oppose this bill is they don't want the residents to know how much money they are making every month. Some years ago when we lived in Cornelius back when the landlord had to hold a meeting when he raised the rent. I have heard of the owner or their representative being threatened at these meetings, which is one of the reasons we passed legislation to end that process. At one of these meetings my husband went to the courthouse and got tax information, to all the utilities, and repairs etc. and said to the the owner at the meeting that we knew what his income was and what his expenses were and it was obvious that he was raising the rent just because he could. He looked a bit stunned but did not deny the information.