

# OREGON LAW CENTER

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921 SW Washington, Suite 516  
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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 3007**  
**Before the House Human Services and Housing Committee**  
**March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013**  
**Submitted by: Sybil Hebb**

Chair Tomei, Vice-Chairs Gomberg and Olson, and members of the committee:

On behalf of the Oregon Law Center, I submit this written testimony in support of HB 3007, which would allow residents of manufactured home parks the opportunity to make an offer to purchase their park, should the park owner decide to sell. I apologize that I am unable to testify in person this afternoon. Thank you for your attention to this important bill.

**Manufactured home parks are valuable communities:** In the technical sense, a manufactured home park is a place where a home owner may rent space on which to place a manufactured home. The park provides basic utilities such as water, sewer, electricity, or natural gas and other amenities such as garbage removal, community rooms, pools, and playgrounds. In a more meaningful sense, parks are a place where residents take care of one another, and look out for one another. Park communities are an especially important source of housing for our senior populations.

**Park communities can be destroyed by the sale of a park:** When a park owner chooses to sell the park, residents are at risk of losing their homes or of becoming subject to significant rent increases by new owners. Many park residents live on a fixed income. The cost and struggle of moving creates significant health, safety, and financial burdens for these residents. Often, residents' homes cannot be moved. If a home cannot be moved from a closed park, it becomes virtually worthless. If a home can be moved to another park, it is only at great expense.

**Resident ownership preserves park communities:** Resident ownership (or nonprofit ownership) is the only way to limit future rent increases which make parks unaffordable for many, especially seniors living on fixed incomes. Resident ownership is also the only way to avoid the risk of closure, bad park management, or failure to make repairs.

**HB 3007 facilitates resident ownership by offering residents the opportunity to purchase the park, if the owner decides to sell:** Prior to putting the property on the market, the owner would give notice to the residents. Residents who organize and respond according to the proposal would have the chance to make an offer to compete to purchase the park.

**HB 3007 is fair to park owners:**

Current law already requires landlords to negotiate with tenants prior to a park sale. Both owners and residents acknowledge the current law does not work well for either side. The bill contains the following reasonable provisions:

- (1) If a landlord gets an unsolicited offer, the landlord is free to accept that offer with no delay;
- (2) If a landlord decides to sell, without having first received an unsolicited offer, the landlord must notify the tenants and allow them to compete to buy the park;
- (3) The landlord can take the best offer; this is not a first right of refusal; and
- (4) Tenants who want to compete to buy a park must meet certain requirements at short intervals or lose their right to compete.

**Park owners benefit by advertising their parks as long-term communities. Residents should have the opportunity to purchase their parks, if the landlord decides to sell and jeopardize that community.** Park owners advertise their parks as communities, a place where residents can retire and share their last years with good neighbors in a close and supportive community. Residents move into communities based on those expectations. When a landlord then chooses to sell the community, residents should be allowed to compete – fairly and squarely - to purchase that community, at a fair and full price.

For these reasons, on behalf of vulnerable park residents, we urge your support of HB 3007.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Sybil Hebb