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Minnesota needs a Manufactured Home Park Resident Bill of Rights

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Gwen Elliott from Blaine returned to work after 30 years at UPS because she could no longer afford her rent. George Zuccolotto in Northfield was promised no rent increase, then received new fees for water and trash — resulting in $180 in additional costs over three years. Sammi Silver watched her Lake Elmo rent spike 40% over five years.

These cases reflect a systematic pattern: out-of-state operators buying Minnesota manufactured home parks and implementing aggressive rent increases on residents who own their homes but rent the underlying land. Because relocating a manufactured home costs thousands of dollars, residents face limited options when corporate owners raise costs.

The financial dynamics are straightforward: RHP Properties, a Michigan corporation with over $6 billion in managed assets, acquired 50 Midwest parks in 2022, including seven in Minnesota. Lakeshore Management, based in Skokie, Illinois, purchased Viking Terrace in Northfield in 2022 and immediately faced enforcement action from Attorney General Keith Ellison for imposing rules that prohibited residents from taking evening walks or children from playing together in their yards.

According to organizing groups tracking sales, most parks sold in Minnesota during 2024 went to institutional investors rather than local operators. Out-of-state buyers have accounted for more than half of all manufactured home park sales since 2015; 81% of parks sold in 2021 went to out-of-state operators. The 10 Twin Cities parks with the highest rents are all owned by out-of-state buyers.

The Manufactured Home Park Resident Bill of Rights, introduced by Sen. Liz Boldon, DFL-Rochester, and Rep. Matt Norris, DFL-Blaine, addresses this pattern through three core provisions: capping annual rent increases at 3%; limiting late fees to 8% of rent; and strengthening the right of first refusal to ensure Minnesota residents receive genuine opportunity to purchase park land when it becomes available for sale. Furthermore, it restricts park owners from bundling utilities to hide fees or usage, and expands access for utility companies to maintain essential infrastructure like power lines, gas pipes and water mains.

The right of first refusal provision merits particular attention. Similar notification requirements have operated successfully in at least six other states, including New Hampshire,

where the mechanism has functioned for over 30 years. The policy does not mandate outcomes — it simply requires that park owners notify residents when a sale is planned and provides 60 days for residents to organize and submit an offer. When I spoke to Norris, he put it simply: "What many people call mobile or trailer homes are simply *not* that mobile."

Minnesota's manufactured home sector represents significant affordable housing stock. Both sides of the aisle know the stakes, as Rep Jon Koznick, R-Lakeville, acknowledged in 2019 that manufactured homes constitute the state's "largest source of non-subsidized affordable housing." Approximately 50,000 manufactured homes exist statewide, with roughly 40,000 located in parks. Rep. Spencer Igo, a Grand Rapids Republican who co-chairs the House housing committee, has emphasized manufactured homes as naturally occurring affordable housing — market-created homeownership opportunities requiring no government subsidy.

The operational contrast between corporate and cooperative ownership demonstrates the issue's stakes.Park Plaza Cooperative in Fridley, where residents purchased their community in 2011, has seen either no rent increases or increases as modest as $6 per month over 10 years. During that period, residents invested in infrastructure improvements including road replacement, water and sewer system upgrades, a tornado shelter, and a playground. Meanwhile, corporate-owned parks with 500 home sites consistently rank among the metro area's highest-rent properties.

Sixty residents testified at the Capitol about conditions in their communities. The organizing effort spans multiple parks — Blaine International Village, Viking Terrace, Evergreen Estates — and crosses traditional political boundaries. These residents include working families, retirees who spent decades in positions at companies like UPS, and veterans on fixed incomes.

"Park residents have earned the equity in their homes. When lot rent goes up, they either give up that equity or give up their grocery budget… nobody should have to choose" Norris said in our conversation.

The Manufactured Home Park Resident Bill of Rights creates baseline protections for Minnesotans who own homes but remain vulnerable to land cost escalation. When Illinois-based companies purchase Minnesota communities and implement rent structures that strain residents on fixed incomes, the result is wealth extraction from Minnesota households to distant corporate offices. The proposed legislation establishes parameters that preserve community stability while maintaining property rights.

Igo has demonstrated that housing policy can transcend partisan divisions through practical focus on affordability, diversity of housing types, and residential stability. The manufactured home question tests whether Minnesota will protect naturally occurring affordable homeownership or permit corporate operators to convert that housing stock into extraction opportunities.

The evidence supports legislative action.

Out-of-state corporate consolidation of manufactured home parks correlates with rent increases that outpace resident income growth, creating housing instability for Minnesotans who made legitimate homeownership investments. The Manufactured Home Park Resident Bill of Rights

provides a policy framework that aligns with conservative principles of protecting property owners from predatory practices while preserving Minnesota's affordable housing infrastructure. With eviction rates climbing higher and higher, for tenants and manufactured home owners' sakes, there's no time to lose.

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