

Sen. Smith, Rep. Emerson: Manufactured home owners protection bill introduced

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Madison, WI — Senator Jeff Smith (D-Brunswick) and Representative Jodi Emerson (D-Eau Claire) introduced comprehensive legislation to strengthen protections for residents of manufactured home communities and preserve one of Wisconsin's last remaining sources of truly affordable housing.

“For many residents, especially seniors and retirees on fixed incomes, manufactured home communities are their only affordable housing option,” said Senator Smith. “Without protections, these individuals are forced to choose between unaffordable rent hikes or losing their homes entirely.”

The proposal, LRB-5763, addresses the unique challenges faced by residents of manufactured home communities, where individuals often own their homes but rent the land beneath them. Unlike traditional housing, many manufactured homes cannot be relocated due to high transportation costs or structural limitations, leaving residents with few options when rent increases or community sales occur.

“These homes are the last stand for affordable housing for thousands of Wisconsinites,” said Representative Emerson. “This bill provides long-overdue rights and stability for residents who deserve fairness, transparency, and a real chance to remain in their homes.”

In recent years, private equity firms are purchasing manufactured home communities across Wisconsin. These acquisitions frequently result in steep rent increases, added fees, and neglected maintenance, while residents face eviction threats if they cannot keep up with skyrocketing rent increases.

Currently, Wisconsin law provides no meaningful protections for residents of manufactured home communities. This legislation safeguards Wisconsin's most vulnerable housed population.

The legislation would:

- Establish a right of first refusal for residents to purchase their community when a legitimate third-party offer is made
- Require advance notice and place limits on rent increases tied to inflation.
- Provide tax incentives to support resident-owned community associations
- Strengthen regulations and oversight of manufactured home community operations
- Impose penalties for violations of the law

The bill has been circulated to members of the legislature for co-sponsorship before being referred to a committee for a public hearing.