

Michael Helie
Sanford
LD 1723

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I am submitting my written testimony for LD 1723 electronically as I am not able to make the drive to Augusta.

The reason I am in support of LD 1723 is because I am having a hard time paying my lot rent at this time. When I bought my mobile home 4 years ago my rent was \$360.00 a month. At that time the park was owned by a local family who cared for the tenants and their wellbeing. Less than 4 months after I bought my home the park was sold to a Corporation (Phillips international). In less than 5 years, my rent is now \$515.00. I am on a fixed income (disability) and am unable to work more to cover the rent increases. I am in constant fear of losing my home, the only one I will ever have as I am older and unable to work because of a disability. I lay in bed at night awake, wondering how much longer I will have a roof over my head. I know if LD 1723 is not moved to the next step in the process the park rent will increase too much more than I can afford and I will be homeless with no place to go. I am scared to death that I will be living on the streets and have all of my possessions taken from me. I have no family left that I could move in with. I feel like Phillips international does not look at me as a person and only wants my money each month. They show no remorse that they are causing me great hardship by increasing the rent to more than I can afford. There is no way I will be able to pay for fuel as we all rent and property taxes if LD 1723 is not passed on.

I also would like to take this opportunity to let you know that as of last year the rent for all new incoming tenants went up to \$800.00 monthly as well as an entrance fee of over \$900. This is in addition to the fee paid by the incoming tenant for a background check. In less than one year, the rent increased up to \$900 a month for tenants who want to move into Country living park. This is preventing people from buying places that are for sale in the parks that Phillips owns. This is a way for the corporation to lock in the tenants that are stuck in the parks and can't sell to get out. I personally feel trapped as well as have no options to survive this very scary and unsettling dilemma caused by Phillips international.

I went door to door asking for support for LD 1723 in two of the parks that Phillips owns, one being Country living park in Sanford that I live in. I was so moved by the people who were like me, scared and not sure what to do about the increased lot rent. Most of the people I talked with about the bill said they know in their hearts that it is a matter of time and they are going to be homeless. I talked to others who told me they can not put food on the table now and that they definitely would not be able to serve their family three meals a day if the rent goes up any more. I also talked to a lady who told me she will not be able to pay for her medication or pay for gas to get to her Dr. appointments once the new rent goes into effect.

In closing I am asking for your support in this very important matter. I hope you will support LD 1723 and know that there really are living people behind your actions that will definitely be homeless should this bill not get your support.

Thank You for taking the time to read my testimony. Please do the right thing and support the people who are less stable financially than the corporations are and who really do need your help.

Humbly submitted,
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