

My name is Holly Hook and I live in Swartz Creek Estates in Swartz Creek, Michigan, which is a manufactured home community. Before 2018, we had a great community owner who charged reasonable lot rent fees and kept the community running well.

My community had no notice that our community had been sold in 2018 until Havenpark Capital, an out-of-state owner, left notes on our door that informed us that our lot rent would increase a full 25% in one month.

On top of this, we were given no way to contact the new owner.

Over the next year, Havenpark continued to increase the rent and add charges that used to be included in our rent. This included charges for garbage, admin fees, and sewer.

The increased rent and fees in my community have jumped over 100% since 2018. Increases every year are at least 10% and are always due to a vague 'cost of doing business.' Now, our manager oversees multiple parks, and you cannot reach the new owner.

My community is one of the luckier ones. Many residents around Michigan are also suffering from severe cuts in maintenance which cause health and safety issues, and people are getting hurt. Many communities have sewage backing up in places, and the water from the taps is yellow or orange. Many community owners fail to address these issues, and residents are stuck circling between their townships, law enforcement, LARA, and the attorney general without resolution. Meanwhile, predatory owners do not face any consequences.

These absentee, predatory owners also often lose rent payments, intimidate, evict, shut off water, and overcharge for utilities. This is happening to seniors, disabled folks, veterans, and hardworking families.

Even worse, LARA is currently unable to enforce our current protections, leaving residents with no recourse, and residents have no way to tell where their rent money is going.

Because we are a unique class of renters, we cannot simply pick up and leave since we own our homes but rent the land. This leads to many people losing their homes without compensation.

I am testifying in opposition to House Bills 4886 through 4889. These bills provide little to no protections for residents and provide very few consequences for predatory owners who engage in unsafe practices. These bills do not address rent and fee gouging, utility transparency, ease of payment for seniors, or infrastructure issues at all. These bills impose no consequences or enforcement for failing to offer a lease or contact information for the community owner.

I am here today with other grassroots resident leaders from Holland, Kalamazoo, Battle Creek, Rochester Hills, White Lake, Clarkston, Auburn Hills, and Northville. It's not a small thing for folks of modest means to drop everything and go to Lansing for a day, let alone two weeks in a row, and there would have been more of us if we had gotten more notice of this hearing.

Last week 750 Michiganders submitted cards to the Senate Housing Committee in support of the real protections offered in SB486-492 and the companion House Bills 5157-5163 assigned to this committee. I urge you to support the real bills that provide protections for real people in our state who are suffering at the hands of predatory real estate speculators. I urge you to oppose the distraction and especially the incentives toward home theft in HB4886-4889.

Thank you for your time and for listening.