

CAPITOL BEAT

Your News from Tallahassee



By FMO Legislative Counsel, Nancy Black Stewart

END OF THE YEAR, ALREADY?!?

Good grief, folks! Where did this year go?? As we head into the holidays, I wish all of you, and yours, the very best of the season. And here we go for a busy 2024!

The FMO will support House Bill 613 during the 2024 Regular Session which begins January 9th. Representative Paula Stark, (Florida House District 47 covering parts of Osceola and Orange), is the bill sponsor for House Bill 613. Representative Stark said, "Over the past several months I have been involved with some of the challenges of the mobile home owners in my House District. I am concerned about the well-being of my constituents as I have seen first-hand the inequality between the home owners and the park owner. My bill won't solve all the problems, but I believe it will be very helpful over time." The link to HB 613: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2024/613/BillText/Filed/PDF>

The Senate companion bill will be sponsored by Senator Colleen Burton, (Senate District 12 representing part of Polk). The bills are similar, although not identical. At this writing the proposed Senate Bill is still with the Senate Bill Drafting Service.

When the bills are referred to their respective committees, FMO will put out a call to action so you can reach out to those specific committee members as you have done over so many years. In the meantime, please contact your own Senator and Representative to ask for their support. The House, (www.myflorida-house.gov), and Senate, (www.flsenate.gov) websites are user friendly and all you need is your own address! In the Senate, click on Senators and go to Find Your Legislators. With the House Home Page, scroll down and click on the Find Your Representative box.

The following information should be helpful as you organize your outreach to Legislators. Please understand that the bills are likely to change as we move forward and the information below will be updated.

- The bill improves the opportunity to mediate a dispute between homeowners and the park owner. In current law, mediation may be requested relating to

whether a lot rent increase is unreasonable, whether a change in services or utilities is unreasonable, or whether a change in the rules and regulations is unreasonable. The Division has frequently been unresponsive to the request. [amend s. 723.037, s. 723.038, s. 723.0381]

--Creates an alternative to Division involvement in that it permits the parties to a dispute to agree to select a mediator without petitioning the Division for mediation.

--The bill leaves intact the procedure in current law to involve the Division if that is the choice.

- The bill addresses several issues in the event that a homeowner must have a live-in health care aide or assistant: [amends s. 723.051]

--Clarifies that pursuant to the Federal Fair Housing Act a live-in health care aide or assistant shall have ingress and egress to and from the homeowner's site, similar to an invitee as in current law.

--The live-in health care aide or assistant will have no rights of tenancy in the park.

--The homeowner will pay for a background screening if one is necessary.

--The homeowner is responsible for removing a live-in health care aide or assistant, and those associated costs, if the person is no longer necessary.

- The bill will increase the payout amounts from the Florida Mobile Home Relocation Corporation: [amends s. 723.0612] Hopefully none of you will ever need to be involved with FMHRC, but if you must relocate due to a change in use of the land, this information is important.

--When a park is closing due to a change in use of the land, the homeowner may apply for assistance to relocate the home, as long as the homeowner has received no funding from park owner who is closing the park.

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--For a relocation, the homeowner receives a voucher which is made payable to the company that provides the relocation services. The voucher may be redeemed by the relocation service for up to two years. Currently there is no expiration.

--If the home can not be relocated, the homeowner may abandon the home in the park and apply for funds as long as the homeowner delivers the current title to the home to the park owner.

--Relocation of a single section would increase from \$ 3,000 to \$ 6,500 and relocation of a double unit would increase from \$ 6,000 to \$ 11,500.

--For an abandonment, the payout would increase from \$ 1,375 to \$ 5,000 for a single unit and increase from \$ 2,750 to \$ 7,000 for a double unit. **These numbers are being reviewed for actuarial soundness so they may change.**

--These amounts more closely align with current economics.

As always, thank you for your support of FMO. FMO is Florida's oldest and largest advocacy group for mobile and manufactured homeowners. Together we can make a difference!

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