

## WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Homeowners and residents in mobile home parks suffer from a number of maladies which result in living situations that are below the standards enjoyed by the general population, with exceptions for the homeless, the mentally ill and the sick.

We need to exclude those who live in resident owned parks because they are not subjected to the abuses, discrimination and other predicaments inflicted upon renters of spaces in investor owned parks. We also need to acknowledge that there are a few parks where the residents are treated fairly and with compassion. There are others where the managers and owners do their best to convince you that you are being treated well, and many other parks where the rights of the residents are systematically being denied, being overcharged, being harassed, being abused and being beaten down.

How do the guilty get away with their abuse of their residents? There are several reasons we can think of and can attribute the acceptance of such poor treatment.

The most prevalent reason is **APATHY**. Many residents do not know their rights or that they are being abused. They just want to live their life and not be bothered by anyone or to bother to learn their rights and to understand the laws intended to protect them.

Another reason is **INTIMIDATION**. They accept whatever is told to them as being gospel. After all, the Managers and Owners know the laws so they would not do anything to risk being called out for any misdeeds. Really? Why risk being evicted for some supposed violation? You best not rock the boat or make waves or you could suffer some retaliation that only makes your life more miserable.

Yet another reason is **HELPLESSNESS**. Even when you feel that the laws to protect you (MRL) are being broken, how do you fight "City Hall"? You can complain to your park HOA (although some of them are merely "yes men" for the management) and any other advocacy group you might find, but there are limits to the kind of pressure that can be applied to insure compliance with the laws. So often the end result of all your efforts are being advised that you need to hire an attorney to find justice. The City or municipality will do as little as possible simply because they feel it is not their responsibility. The State (HUD) and the California Senate Select Committee on Manufactured Homes and Communities which creates the MRL (MobileHome Residency Law ) and passed by the State legislators, will do little or nothing to help homeowners since they claim they have no enforcement rights.

So even if you believe that your Park Owner or Manager is in violation of the regulations established for your protection, it is almost certain that your only recourse is to retain an attorney to file suit against the offenders. But let's be realistic, how many, out of hundreds (or thousands) being deprived their rights and freedoms will do so? How many can afford or even risk the cost of such a solution.

There are undoubtedly other reasons for the absence of unity and failure to challenge the powerful and wealthy investors and park owners, but these three seem to be the dominant reasons. Making the effort to attain a decent standard of living requires abandoning the Apathy camp and the Intimidation camp and requires learning your rights and being willing to fight for them. It means not letting intimidation or the fear of retaliation hold you back. It means getting organized and supporting those organizations that are leading the fight against

the oppressive power that the Park Owners possess. It also means making a super effort to have enforcement, the rule of the day. That may mean less work for the lawyers, or maybe even more, who knows? As a staunch conservative Republican since my teen age years, I now find I am probably in a more liberal place with my advocacy for mobilehome owners rights. I basically have a philosophy that "What's Right is Right , and What's Wrong is Wrong." So even if the laws or regulations are not effective, they need to be changed as well.

There are others who feel very much the same way as I do, we just need many more to pitch in and help fight the battles.

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