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## House overrides veto of Munson mobile-home bill

November 16, 2006

By [NATHANIEL ZIMMER](#) STAFF WRITER

Members of the state House on Tuesday overrode the governor's veto of a bill that would give residents of certain mobile-home parks a way to challenge rent increases.

The bill now goes to the Senate, which is expected to take it up this month.

Rep. Ruth Munson, R-Elgin, sponsored House Bill 5377 in response to complaints by residents about steep rent increases at Willow Lake Estates in Elgin.

The measure passed both houses of the General Assembly earlier this year, but Gov. Rod Blagojevich vetoed it. In a brief statement explaining his decision, Blagojevich noted the bill applies only to publicly traded companies and said that any legislation addressing mobile-home park leases "should apply uniformly to all Illinois mobile-home parks."

Willow Lake Estates residents live in what many people would call mobile homes but are more accurately termed manufactured homes. Although they can be moved, the homes are not mere trailers, and transporting them is expensive. Residents have said in the past that rents in the park have in some cases been set high enough that they cannot afford to stay, cannot afford to move their home to another park and cannot find buyers.

Munson has said she believes the park's owner -- Chicago-based Equity Lifestyle Properties Inc., formerly known as Manufactured Home Communities Inc. -- wants residents to leave so it can replace their homes with larger, more expensive ones for which people would be willing to pay higher rents.

It took two calls to get the bill passed Tuesday, according to Munson. The legislation garnered 69 votes the first time, falling just shy of the three-fifths majority it needed, but earned 75 votes the second time, enough for passage.

"There were many lobbyists hired to kill the bill, and we just worked it," Munson said. "I think in the end, you know, my colleagues understand the need to protect senior citizens."

The bill would give tenants who object to a rent increase the right to initiate a binding appraisal process in which the tenant and park owner would settle on a licensed appraiser who would determine the fair market rent for the property "based on the existing leases of other tenants in the same mobile home park."

Among other things, it also would require park owners to offer leases lasting at least two years and would prevent park owners from increasing rents or imposing fees to reflect the cost of fines or fees imposed on them by a court or government regulator.

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