



A decade ago, manufactured homeowners on Long Island started pushing for rent stabilization. In December, families in Akron decided enough was enough and went out on rent strike. This past year, residents in Sullivan County took their corporate owner to task for code violations. Over the past six months, seniors, families, veterans, immigrants, and people with disabilities who call manufactured home communities home joined together to take action as part of the multi-racial, intergenerational statewide housing movement -- the Upstate Downstate Housing Alliance.

Leaders from manufactured home communities across New York and across the country called elected officials, wrote letters, testified at hearings, and rallied arm-in-arm with our tenant allies to demand that the New York State Legislature and Governor Andrew Cuomo heed our call for housing justice.

It can be hard to pin-point exactly when the political winds started to shift towards our vision for housing justice -- a vision that every family has a decent, affordable home in a healthy and vibrant community.

But we do know why those winds shifted. Because we organized.

*One of the four MHAction legislative action teams made up of community leaders and staff making their voices heard in Albany at the Upstate/Downstate Housing Alliance's May 14th Day of Action: Matt Chapman (IA), Azucena Garza Bulger (TX), Laura and Chris Sprankle (UT), Rosa Pizano (CA), Linda Reynolds (IL), Carl Mazza (FL), Susana Pimento (TX), Kevin Borden (NY), Liz Voigt (NY) with New York Assemblymember Jeffrey Dinowitz.*

Our movement made enormous leaps this year in New York with new protections that block greedy landlords from imposing unjustified rent hikes and trapping people in abusive rent-to-own contracts. We are excited to take this momentum into other fights we are waging in California, Iowa, Utah, Illinois, Florida, Delaware, New Hampshire and beyond, and to continue pushing forward for more wins in New York.

We made giant strides, but there are still more steps we need to take to ensure everyone has a decent and affordable place to call home. Let's take this victorious moment to reflect together on our journey for housing, racial, economic, and gender justice. Let's thank each other for our efforts.

Onward,

MHAction National Core Leadership Team

P.S. See below for an outline of the policy advances that range from rent justification to reforms to rent-to-own contracts to homeowners' rights.

***Overview of Policies Won in New York:***

**-- Rent Protection:** The bill adopts the first protections against unjustified rent increases for manufactured home residents in New York. Community owners cannot increase rent (including all rent, fees, assessments, charges, and utilities) more than 3%, except if justified by an increase in operating expenses, property taxes, or costs directly related to a major capital improvement. Residents can sue in court if a rent increase above 3% is not justified. Even if an increase above 3% is justified, the rent increase cannot go above 6%, unless the court approves a temporary hardship exception.

**-- Tenant rights if existing or prospective owner is going to change the use of the property:** If the community owner is going to change the use of the property and no longer operate it as a manufactured home community, the community owner cannot evict tenants for 2 years and can be ordered to pay each homeowner up to \$15,000. Also, if the community owner receives an offer from a buyer and the buyer is going to change the use of the property, then the homeowners and tenants must be given 140 days to put together their own offer and have the right to purchase the community.

**-- Reforms to rent-to-own contracts:** Rent-to-own contracts must clearly detail specific information about the home and the payments so renters understand the terms, and they cannot charge any additional fee at the end of the contract for transfer of ownership. If a tenant with a rent-to-own contract is evicted, the community owner must refund all the rent-to-own payments. The bill also clarifies that a tenant with a rent-to-own contract is a renter until ownership transfers and the community owner is responsible for warranty of habitability and major repairs until ownership is transferred.

**-- Requirements for lot rent leases:** Leases must include Homeowner/Tenant Bill of Rights that will be developed by the Department of Homes and Community Renewal. If the community owner does not offer a lease, the tenant has all the same rights as a leaseholder and cannot be evicted except for allowable reasons (such as non-payment of rent). Also, a community owner cannot increase rents under tenants are offered a lease.

**-- Reforms to other fees imposed by community owner:** Tenants only have to pay attorney's fees to a community owner if ordered by a court. And late fee can't be more than 3% of what tenant owes and can't be imposed before 10 days after due date.

For the full Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019 click here:

<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2019/s6458>