



## **Improving the Way the State Handles Issues from Within Planned Communities**

Nearly one quarter of Pennsylvania residents live in some type of self-governing community. At my district office in East Stroudsburg, my staff and I receive a tremendous amount of phone calls from frustrated residents and board members from within self-governing communities when certain issues arise.

Unfortunately, besides directing the complaint to a private lawsuit, there are not additional resources available to resolve issues. That is why I am reintroducing legislation to improve the opportunity to mediate and investigate complaints at the state level.

Communities formed under Title 68 are operated under a set of governing bylaws, which create micro governments within. When occasional serious disagreements or incidences of fraud occur in these communities, residents and unit owner boards need somewhere to turn.

Title 68 already allows for complaints regarding financial documents to be filed with the Office of Attorney General's Bureau of Consumer Protection; however, it does not assist with other complaints that may be a violation of other portions of Title 68. Examples include meetings, quorums, voting/proxies and other association records.

My bill would assign such additional tasks to the Bureau of Consumer Protection. Since the bureau is already equipped to handle similar complaints in a way that will find resolution and justice for these disagreements and violations, it makes sense to add these issues to their purview.

The intent of the legislation is to provide assistance to unit owners and board members, alike, when they feel their rights and benefits may have been violated. It could also prevent these parties from having to enter potentially costly lawsuits. Simply put, I believe there should be a way to help mediate and investigate specific violations to ensure the rights of homeowners and boards are protected, working to create more harmonious community living.

I introduced similar legislation in the 2015-16 legislative session which was approved by the House, but not voted on in the Senate. I am hopeful we can get this through both chambers and to the governor's desk for his signature during this session.

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