

## House bills and Hometown's lobbying to change the law

The **Blake lawsuit** was decided in favor of the plaintiffs of the Oakhill manufactured home community in their lawsuit against Hometown America. The court and a subsequent appeals court ruling determined that residents of a manufactured housing community who lease similar lots and are provided similar amenities must be charged similar rents.

Since 2016, Hometown America has been employing lobbyists and making campaign contributions to state legislators to repeal or amend that state regulation -- Massachusetts General Law Chapter 140, Sec. 32L(2), which states:

***"Any rule or change in rent which does not apply uniformly to all manufactured home residents of a similar class shall create a rebuttable presumption that such rule or change in rent is unfair."***

- Public records provided by the **Massachusetts Office of Campaign and Political Finance** reveal that beginning in 2016, the President and CEO of Hometown America (Stephen Braun) and the Chief Investment Office (Patrick Zilis) made **campaign contributions** to State Representative Tackey Chan of Quincy, State Representative James Arciero of Westford, and State Senator John F. Keenan (Norfolk and Plymouth County).
- Representative Chan has repeatedly filed legislation to repeal Sec. 32L(2) beginning with **H3006**, a bill he filed in 2017.
- In 2019 Representative Chan filed a similar bill **H1258**.
- Representative Chan later moved to amend House Bill 5007. The **amendment** would modify Sec. 32L(2), striking out the words "or change in rent", and would apply retroactively.
- In January 2023, Representative Chan filed **House Bill 1302**, to amend retroactively 32L(2) and strike out the words "or change in rent". The bill was reported favorably by committee on 3/14/2024 and referred to the committee on House Steering, Policy and Scheduling.
- In response to House Bill 1302 and the favorable committee finding, the **Manufactured Home Federation of Massachusetts** (MHFM) sent an **email to members** of its organization, recommending members contact legislators to register their disapproval of the bill. A copy of the MHFM email was published on the Oak Point Homeowners Alliance website.
- Hometown America sent an **email to homeowners** on 6/21/2024 in response to the MHFM email and in support of House Bill 1302.
- Hometown America's 6/21/2024 email included a **hyperlink attachment** to a photocopy of the letter that had been sent to the chairs of the Massachusetts legislature's Committee

on Housing by Lisa Goodheart of Fitch Law Partners on October 3, 2023 -- a letter on behalf of Hometown America that supported House Bill 1302. The letter included an appendix that contained comments in support of Hometown's position provided by Oak Point residents who had responded to the May 28, 2021 [letter by Kyle Howieson](#) to Oak Point homeowners regarding the Bartok lawsuit.

### **Lobbying Activity (2021 - 2023)**

Initially, Hometown promoted its legislative efforts through Attorney Rob Kraus and the firm Kraus and Hummel LLP. (All of this info is available through the Commonwealth's [Lobbyist Public Search Website](#)). Since 2021, another team of lobbyists has been employed by Hometown. The public disclosure records listed below indicate that during the three-year period from 2021 thru 2023, Hometown America has spent over \$233,000 lobbying Massachusetts state senators and representatives for legislative changes. According to public records submitted by Attorney Lisa Goodheart, Representative Chan, Representative Arciero and Senator Keenan are legislators whom she has lobbied on behalf of Hometown America.

The following are Massachusetts public records of Hometown America lobbying expenses and activities from 2021 - 2023. To view a record, click the associated download arrow.

### **Hometown America Expenditures**

- 2021 
- 2022 
- 2023 

### **Lobbyist: Lisa Goodheart, Sugarman, Rogers, Barshak & Cohen, P.C.**

- 2021 (July thru December) 
- 2022 (January thru June) 
- 2022 (July thru December) 
- 2023 (January thru June) 

**Lobbyist: Lindsay Toghil,  
O'Neill and Partners LLC.**

2021 (July thru June) 

2021 (July thru December) 

2022 (January thru June) 

2022 (July thru December) 

2023 (January thru June) 