



**House  
Legislative  
Analysis  
Section**

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**MOBILE HOME PARK ANTENNAE**

**House Bill 4396 (Substitute H-2)  
First Analysis (4-22-93)**

**Sponsor: Rep. Thomas Middleton  
Committee: Housing and Urban Affairs**

***THE APPARENT PROBLEM:***

A frequent complaint among mobile home owners is that many mobile home parks prohibit tenants from attaching individual television antennae to the exterior of their mobile homes. Local zoning ordinances may also prohibit this practice in some areas. Sometimes this occurs in situations where a park owner, in an attempt to provide all mobile home park tenants with cable television, contracts with a cable television service, which then disconnects the park's standard UHF-VHF central antenna.

In mobile home parks where the option of hooking up to a central antennae is not available, residents have the choice of using "rabbit ears" -- which provide poor television reception; of hooking up to cable service in order to receive standard television channels; or of receiving cable service, even though they may have no desire for such a service! Indeed, many residents of mobile home parks are seniors, living on fixed incomes, who cannot afford the additional cost of cable television service. These citizens maintain that they should have the same rights as other home owners in this matter.

***THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:***

The bill would amend the Mobile Home Commission Act to permit a mobile home owner to install an exterior television antenna on a mobile home within a park. Under the bill, an owner of a mobile home park, or seasonal mobile home park, could not prohibit a person from installing or maintaining an exterior television antenna on a mobile home unless the park provided park residents with a central television antenna for UHF-VHS reception at no charge. In addition, the bill would clarify that the owner or operator of a mobile home park, or seasonal mobile home park, could not engage, or permit an employee or agent to engage, in illegal conspiring, combining, agreeing, aiding, or abetting in the use of a practice that violated the act.

MCL 125.232a

***FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:***

According to the House Fiscal Agency, the bill would have no impact on state funds. (4-21-93)

***ARGUMENTS:***

***For:***

The bill would alleviate the circumstances related by mobile home owners who testified before the Housing and Urban Affairs Committee. According to some of these residents, as mobile home park tenants they were forced to pay exorbitant hook-up fees to mobile home park owners or to cable television services just so that they could receive "standard" television channels. In other situations, mobile home park owners offered "free cable service," but then raised rents in the park to cover the cost. In one situation, a park owner who had increased rents in this manner later sold the cable television rights to a cable television service. Rents were not lowered, as might have been expected, to reflect this change. Instead, park residents were obliged to pay high monthly rental fees to a cable television service in addition to the higher rents!

***Against:***

As written, the bill contains ambiguous language that could result in confusing the population it seeks to help. For example, the bill would amend the act to specify that an owner of a mobile home park may not illegally require, coerce, or induce a person to do certain things, including purchasing, renting, or leasing goods or services from another as a condition of renting space in a park. The act, however, currently prohibits a mobile home park owner from "requiring, coercing, or inducing" these same actions. The bill, then, would seem to indicate that the performance of these acts was permitted, unless that performance were carried out in an "illegal" manner.

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***Response:***

The language in House Bill 4396 which specifies that an mobile home park owner may not "illegally" require, coerce, or induce a person to do certain things has been introduced to clarify that a practice that is fairly common in the mobile home park industry is not illegal. Under this practice, no rent is charged prospective renters for the first month as an inducement to sign a lease. In such situations, the mobile home park owner is "inducing" a mobile home owner to "rent" a lot in a park, but the practice is not illegal.

***POSITIONS:***

Representatives of the following organizations testified before the Housing and Urban Affairs Committee in support of the bill (4-21-93):

Michigan Manufactured Housing Association.  
Springfield Mobile Home Owners Association.  
The Mobile Home Owners Legislative Association of Michigan.