

*Or Use Your Own Local Organizational Logo*

**Sample Talking Points:**

**Personal Story:**

The most important item to focus on is personal, homeowner stories that clearly illustrate the challenges that homeowners are facing due to ELS’ business practices. These personal testimonies should be clear and concise (2 to 3 minutes). Testimonies should also highlight solutions that we are collectively asking ELS, and other large, corporate manufactured housing community owners, to enact. (See below)

**Who Are We:**

The Center for Community Change and the National Manufactured Home Owners Association are working together to mobilize and engage homeowners that live in manufactured housing communities that are marketed towards seniors, veterans and people with disabilities. The focus of the campaign work over the past eighteen months has been to organize manufactured home owners that reside in communities owned and operated by Equity LifeStyle Properties, Inc. (ELS). ELS, which is chaired by Sam Zell, is the nation’s largest corporate owner of manufactured home communities that are marketed to seniors. ELS currently operates 380 communities in 32 states that directly impact 141,000 manufactured home owners.

**What Are Our Concerns:**

ELS has come under scrutiny by many homeowners across the country for undermining the retirement security of thousands of those seniors by drastically increasing rents, causing economic eviction, neglecting needed capital improvements and being insensitive to the needs of the mostly elderly homeowners living in ELS-owned communities.

In addition, Sam Zell, ELS’ Chairman, is also undercutting the economic security of seniors and people with disabilities by funding politicians and political action committees that are bent on dismantling the cornerstones of our nation’s retirement security programs: specifically, Social Security and Medicare. For facts and figures on politicians and political action communities that Zell has supported and harmful statements that he has made in reference to Social Security, please reference our “Paradise Lost” Report. This report can be found at: <http://www.mhaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Story-Book-PDF.pdf>

**What We Are Doing/Asking For:**

In response to ELS’ business practices and Sam Zell’s political contribution, ELS homeowners, supported by the Center for Community Change and the National Manufactured Home Owners Association, have launched a national campaign targeting ELS and Zell (you can learn more at <http://mhaction.org>.).

The Center for Community Change (CCC) and the National Manufactured Home Owners Association (NMHOA) have called on ELS to re-evaluate its business model and management practices. CCC and NMHOA believe that a sensible alternative model for ELS is to put in place long-term lease agreements with fair and balanced rent increases and capital improvement processes. Additionally, ELS would be able to engender a higher level of customer loyalty by pushing for policies that protect and strengthen our nation’s Social Security and Medicare systems.

**What Makes These Events Timely:**

Events across the country are being held to coincide with the Manufactured Housing Institute’s Fall Leadership Forum that is taking place in Chicago from October 16th to 18th. Sam Zell, Chairman of ELS, is the keynote speaker. The forum is entitled ‘Building a Vision For Our Future.” Homeowners are questioning Sam Zell’s vision which seems to be based on forcing seniors and hard working families out of their homes. Homeowners are declaring that is not a vision that is welcome in any community.

In addition, attacks on key retirement security programs are currently being debated in Congress. Congressional leaders are mulling over damaging changes to our nation’s Social Security system that would significantly undermine the economic security of millions. In reference to Social Security, many in Congress are calling for the enactment of a Chained CPI (a terrible cost of living adjustment formula that would result in direct benefit cuts over time to our nation’s seniors) and an increase in the retirement age.

**Who is CCC/NMHOA:**

Founded in 1968, the Center for Community Change is one of the longest-standing champions for low-income people and communities of color. CCC seeks to confront the vital issues of today and build the social movements of tomorrow. For more information go to: [www.communitychange.org](http://www.communitychange.org)

For decades, the National Manufactured Home Owners Association has represented seniors, veterans and the hundreds of thousands of Americans who live in manufactured housing communities. For more information go to: [www.nmhoa.org](http://www.nmhoa.org)