



HOUSING NOW

December 2025

ENGAGE WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVES IN A POSITIVE WAY

The NYS Legislature goes back into session in January every year, so we want to help you prepare. Do you know who your NYS and local government representatives are? Great, you're off to a good start! Do you engage with them in any way? Hopefully, but if not, you should! Your voice matters more than you may think.

Most people contact their representatives when there is a problem, so they are only hearing one side of the story. Make sure they hear your side too. Are you the highest taxpayer in your town? Do you provide affordable housing for hundreds or possibly thousands of people?

What makes your viewpoint important? As a constituent, you offer something unique: a personal story, a specific local example, or firsthand knowledge of a community's needs. It's not simply "making a voice heard"; it's a strategic act of providing valuable, otherwise unobtainable information that helps the official do their job more effectively.

At the state level, where officials often have smaller staffs and constituencies, the impact of individual contact is magnified. Legislative offices report that receiving as few as six or eight communications on one side of an issue can be perceived as a "landslide," simply because they hear from so few people on most matters. This demonstrates that a single, well-articulated message isn't a drop in the ocean - it's a significant data point in an official's decision-making process.

The true power of a constituent lies not just in their vote, but in their ability to provide a scarce and valuable resource: authentic, on-the-ground intelligence about the real-world impact of policy.

While elected officials are influenced by many factors - including party leadership, media coverage, and professional lobbyists - a primary consideration for any representative is the direct effect of a policy on the people in their district or state.

So how do you prepare to get in touch with elected officials at all levels?

Tip #1: Always Identify as a Constituent: This is non-negotiable. An official's primary responsibility is to the people who live in their district. Identifying as a constituent is the key that unlocks their attention. Always include your full name and street address in written communication, and state your city or town at the beginning of phone calls or meetings.

Tip #2: Be Specific with a Clear "Ask": Vague statements like "please support the environment" or "do something about healthcare" are ineffective because they're not actionable. A specific, clear request gives the office a concrete task. State your "ask" early and clearly. For example, you should say "I am writing to urge you to vote YES on S1234, the Manufactured Housing Act" or "I am requesting that you cosponsor Senator Smith's bill to increase funding for local community health centers." Ensure your "ask" is appropriate for the official's jurisdiction—a federal representative cannot fix a local pothole, and a city council member cannot change national immigration policy.

Tip #3: Tell Your Story: Make Policy Personal: This is your most powerful tool for cutting through the noise. Legislators and staff are inundated with statistics, reports, and talking points. A personal story that illustrates how a policy affects a real person, family, business, or community is far more memorable and persuasive. Instead of just stating

Engage, cont. on Page 3

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Sources

¹ https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2022-11/ZERH%20Name%20and%20Logo%20Use%20Guidelines_0.pdf

² Energy savings are based on electrical and gas energy consumption using NREL® BEopt™ to estimate annual electrical and gas energy consumption of a home built to DOE Zero Energy Ready Home™ guidelines compared to the same home built only to industry and HUD standards in the cities listed. Estimates are based on calculations for multi-section Tempo Let It Be and Shout models.

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that a particular bill is bad, explain how a provision would directly impact you and your business. Instead of saying a small business grant program is important, describe how it allowed a local shop to stay open and keep people employed. This personal context is unique data that only a constituent can provide.

Tip #4: Be Informed, Factual, and Brief: Credibility is paramount. Focus on a single issue and keep it concise—ideally one page for a letter or email, and just a few minutes for a phone call. Use facts to support your opinion, and refer to bills by number (e.g., A1234 or S567) if possible. If an official or staff member asks a question you can't answer, it's better to say, "That's a great question. I don't know the answer, but I will find out and get back to you," than to guess. This honesty preserves credibility and creates a legitimate reason for follow-up contact.

Tip #5: Be Polite and Respectful: "You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar" is the guiding principle for effective advocacy. Rudeness, anger, threats, or ultimatums are counterproductive and can permanently damage your ability to work with an office. Even when in strong disagreement, maintain a polite and respectful tone to keep communication lines open. Acknowledging valid opposing viewpoints can strengthen your position, showing you've considered the issue carefully from all sides.

Tip #6: Respect the Staff: Your Most Important Audience: In most interactions, you'll communicate with a staff member, not the elected official directly. This isn't a slight—it's how the system functions efficiently. Legislative staff are subject matter experts and trusted advisors to the official. They read emails, take calls, and prepare briefing memos that inform the official's decisions. Building a positive, professional relationship with staff can turn them into internal champions for your cause. They're your most critical audience, and treating them with respect is essential for long-term success.

Tip #7: Follow Up: The conversation doesn't end after first contact. Following up demonstrates seriousness and persistence. After an in-person or phone meeting, send a brief thank-you email to the

person who took time to speak with you. If you promised additional information, provide it promptly. Patient, polite, and persistent follow-up keeps your issue on the office's radar and reinforces your role as a dedicated and reliable resource.

Building Long-Term Relationships: The most effective advocates don't just contact officials when they need something. They build ongoing relationships by:

- **Expressing appreciation:** Thank officials when they take positions you support;
- **Providing updates:** Share relevant local developments or news stories;
- **Offering expertise:** If you have professional knowledge relevant to policy issues, offer to serve as a resource; and
- **Staying informed:** Follow the official's work and committee assignments.

So what's the best way to get in touch? The highest impact would be to visit their office in person. It's the best way to build a relationship and discuss issues. It puts a face to a name and makes you more memorable. You can share your story and show your passion for matters that affect your business. It's okay to meet with a member of your representative's staff. They might have more knowledge about a particular topic. Arrive on time, be prepared with clear talking points, bring a one-page summary to leave behind, and always follow up with a thank-you email.

The second best way is a phone call. They are highly effective, valued by many legislative offices more than emails because they require more effort and allow for direct, real-time conversation. Have a short script ready that includes your introduction as a constituent.

Sending an e-mail or a letter to your reps can also be effective. A well-crafted, personalized message can be extremely persuasive. The key is personalization - generic form letters are far less effective. Research indicates that while it might take hundreds of form emails to get an office's attention, fewer than 50 unique, personalized emails can make a significant impression. A personal story that illustrates the real-world impact of a policy helps your message stand out.

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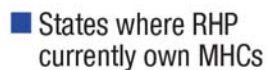


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GETTING READY FOR WINTER

Help create some good will with your manufactured home community tenants by sharing some money saving ideas like these:

Clean gutters – once all the leaves are down, clean your gutters to help prevent water from pooling around your home.

Get water away from house – see above “clean gutters” and try to get water to drain well away from your home. If needed, add extensions to downspouts. Disconnect garden hoses and drain the water that remains in the faucets. No one wants any pipes to burst! This will help existing foundations, whether it’s a slab, gravel pad, or something else.

Seal up masonry – repair broken joints and crack in walkways, steps and stonework. This helps create shovel-friendly paths to use when the snow start flying!

Hire an arborist. Say what? When was the last time you walked around your property to look for rotting trees or damaged/dangling limbs that may come down in the next storm? Take the time, and invest the money in this! Most horticulturists advise waiting to prune until late winter or just before spring growth begins. You’ve still got time!

How can you reduce heating costs? Try to make your home as energy-efficient as possible. Add insulation, caulking around windows and doors and think about replacing windows. Remember - only certified mechanics/installers can replace windows and doors in Manufactured Homes. Weatherstripping around doors and windows is well worth the savings it creates! You can also use a door sweep to stop drafts from entering your home under an exterior door.

Install a programmable thermostat. Annual savings average \$180 per year on fuel costs. Keeping temperatures consistent can also help saving fuel costs. Don’t want to go to the expense or hassle of a programmable thermostat? Then set your thermostat manually – and leave it. Set a temperature for day and night. Cold? Put on socks and a sweater.

Reverse your ceiling fans. If your ceiling fan has a reverse switch, use it to run the fan’s blades in a clockwise direction after you turn on your heat. This will help produce an updraft and push the heated air down into a room. This is especially helpful with high ceilings.

Check your roof. Make sure there are no damaged, loose or missing shingles that may leak during winter storms or from melting snow. Hire a certified mechanic to do any needed repairs.

Have your furnace serviced before it gets consistently cold. Regular service can help catch problems before expensive breakdowns and keep it running more efficiently. Make sure furnace filters are changed and/or cleaned on a regular basis. Pleated filters work best because they trap more dirt particles.



**THE NYHA OFFICE
WILL BE CLOSED
DEC 24-26 & DEC 31-JAN 2
FOR THE CHRISTMAS
& NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS**

Engage, cont. from Page 3

Have you ever heard the saying “a picture is worth a thousand words?” That’s a true and powerful statement. If you own or manage a community, consider giving your representatives a “before” and “after” photo of improvements and successful projects that have been completed. Literally showing them the benefits of living in your community can also be powerful. Invite them on a tour, but remember to make sure everything looks ship-shape when they visit.

We hope you find this information useful and will be more proactive with your state and local representatives in 2026 and beyond.

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Some Towns and Villages have outdated zoning that prohibits Manufactured Homes on private land. In 2015, Legislation was signed in to law that prohibits discrimination against an “aesthetically similar” home, manufactured homes included.

If you need a copy of the law to give to your Town or Village Officials, please reach out to:
Kathy@nyhousing.org



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HOUSE ENERGY SUBCOMMITTEE PASSES BILL TO RESTORE HUD CODE SUPREMACY

On November 19, 2025, the House Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Energy passed legislation to change the Department of Energy's (DOE) role to an advisory capacity when it comes to energy standards for the construction of manufactured homes. Introduced by Rep. Erin Houchin (IN-09) and Housing Subcommittee Chairman Mike Flood (NE-01), H.R. 5184, the Affordable Housing Over Mandating Efficiency Standards (Affordable HOMES) Act, was passed by a voice vote and moves to the full Energy and Commerce committee for consideration.

The bill repeals Section 413 of the Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA) of 2007 and ensures that the DOE's final rule on Energy Conservation Standards for Manufactured Housing will have no force or effect. Section 413 directed the DOE to establish energy efficiency construction standards for manufactured housing in contravention of long-standing authority of HUD to promulgate federal construction standards for manufactured homes via the HUD Code, which the agency has overseen for over 50 years. The duplicative agency mandate created regulatory confusion and undermined the goal of advancing practical energy efficiency improvements within the HUD Code.

In comments supporting the legislation, Subcommittee Chair Bob Latta (OH-05) said, "Under current law, both DOE and HUD have overlapping authority to set energy efficiency standards for manufactured housing. Including DOE in this authority creates redundant unnecessary standards that confuse the regulatory process making it more difficult to construct and ultimately purchase affordable homes."

During committee consideration of the legislation, Rep. Jake Auchincloss (MA-04) offered an amendment to authorize the Department of Energy to serve in an advisory role to HUD. The amendment passed by a voice vote.

In explaining his amendment, Rep. Auchincloss said, "The amendment that I have at the desk is intended to strengthen this bill. The amendment retains the Department of Energy's input on energy efficiency standards in an advisory capacity ... It is the HUD Secretary, the HUD staff that is best positioned to think about and to incorporate feedback from other experts and entities in putting forward regulations that make manufactured housing work at scale. Boosting manufactured and modular housing production is an important opportunity for us to build our way out of the current housing crisis and this is a common-sense set of reforms that will help unleash housing production."

H.R. 5184 now moves to the full Committee on Energy and Commerce for consideration, with a vote anticipated in December.



Manufactured Housing Institute

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Arlington, VA 22209

Phone: 703-558-0400

Email: info@mfghome.org

www.manufacturedhousing.org

MEMBER MEET-UP: DECEMBER 9, 2025

**WE HOPE YOU WILL PLAN TO JOIN US ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9th
FROM 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM TO DISCUSS RPL 233!**

RPL 233 & RPL 233(b):

What discrepancies have you discovered with RPL 233 and RPL 233(b)?

The Association has been having discussions with the NYS Division of Housing & Community Renewal (HCR) to get some clarification and guidance on RPL 233 & RPL 233(b), specifically about rent limitations and allowable pass-throughs. If you attended our 75th Annual Convention, you know this was a hot topic.

HCR has asked for real-life numbers and specific issues, not just anecdotal info that the Association passes along, which is why we are asking you to please take the time to answer our survey:

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This survey will serve as a starting point to a deeper dive to get answers, and we appreciate the time you put into answering these questions. If you want to share more details, excel spreadsheets or any accounting reports, please mail those with this survey.

PLEASE NOTE: None of your information will be shared with others without your prior authorization.

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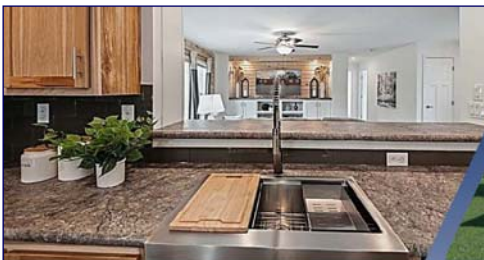
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