

Rally demands strong Homeowners' Bill of Rights

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ST. PAUL (May 15, 2013) —More than 200 Minnesotans filled the rotunda of the State Capitol urging legislators to bring a strong Homeowners' Bill of Rights to the floors of the House and Senate for a vote before the end of the session. Community leaders from throughout Minnesota were joined by State Reps. Melissa Hortman, Raymond Dehn, John Lesch, other legislators, members of the clergy and homeowners facing foreclosure.

It is still possible for the Legislature to pass a strong Homeowners' Bill of Rights, comprehensive legislation that will protect Minnesotans from unfair and unnecessary foreclosures. The strong showing of support indicates that Minnesotans want to see passage of the bill this year.

Throughout the state, more than 150,000 Minnesota homeowners have lost their homes to foreclosure since 2006. In 2012, there were three times more foreclosures in Minnesota than in 2005, continuing to have a disastrous effect on Minnesota communities. These foreclosures can and should be avoided.

Rose McGee, a Maple Grove homeowner who was facing foreclosure as the result of a banking practice known as "dual tracking" spoke to the crowd. Recently, McGee received word that loan servicer Fannie Mae agreed to a settlement after a yearlong campaign to stay in her home. McGee's story was one of many that provided inspiration for this legislation.

"We must not give up," McGee said. "I will be staying in my home, but nobody should have to fight this hard for something so simple. The legislature must immediately pass a strong Homeowners' Bill of Rights as a small step towards making sure no one else has to go through such an arduous journey."

U.S. Rep. Keith Ellison was in Washington during the time of the event and sent a message of support, which was read by a staff representative. "I want to send my sincere appreciation and gratitude to each one of you who are involved in this movement to protect homeowners," Ellison said via the statement. "I stand with each of you who are fighting to pass legislation that puts our community and homeowners first."

A vote on a strong Homeowners' Bill of Rights could come as early as tomorrow in either the House or the Senate. Today's rally was sponsored by ISAI AH, MN Neighborhoods Organizing for Change (NOC), Occupy Homes, CTUL, SEIU and Minnesotans for a Fair Economy.