

Good afternoon Madam Chair and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

My name is Rusty Mitchell, and I serve as Executive Director of Homewood Living Williamsport. I previously served in leadership at Homewood Living Frederick. In both roles, I have worked closely with residents and governing boards and have seen firsthand how governance stability affects daily community life.

I respectfully ask for an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 488.

Residents already have a meaningful voice in Homewood's governance. Across our five communities, seven residents currently serve on boards in fiduciary roles. They meet the same standards as all other board members and are focused on the long-term health and mission of the organization.

My concern with SB 488 is how it would operate in a multi-campus organization.

In practice, a mandated resident-elected board seat would be determined by the largest campus. That would allow one community, simply because of its size, to select a voting board member whose authority extends over smaller campuses whose residents may hold different views.

I am aware that residents at one campus have been actively communicating with residents in my community in an effort to build support for this legislation. I have heard firsthand from Williamsport residents who feel that their perspectives are being overshadowed and that a localized dispute is being extended into their community. They have expressed frustration with this approach and concern about what could happen if similar dynamics were introduced at the board level.

Board members handle highly sensitive financial, strategic, and personnel information. If board seats become vehicles for organized advocacy rather than fiduciary stewardship, it risks internal disruption and governance instability.

Residents are not monolithic. No single individual can represent the diverse perspectives of all campuses.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to oppose Senate Bill 488.

Thank you for your consideration.