

No. R-155. House concurrent resolution congratulating Westgate Housing Inc. of Brattleboro on the nonprofit corporation's 25th anniversary.

(H.C.R.131)

Offered by Representatives Kornheiser of Brattleboro, Burke of Brattleboro, and Goodnow of Brattleboro

Offered by Senators Harrison and Hashim

Whereas, the story of Westgate Housing Inc. is the saga of residents determined to continue residing in their affordable rental housing units and becoming actively involved in their community's management, and

Whereas, Westgate was privately constructed in 1971 as a 98-unit rental housing complex pursuant to a contract with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that guaranteed the units would remain affordable for 20–40 years, and

Whereas, after the initial 20-year contractual period expired, it was apparent that significant rent increases were looming that would force most residents to find alternative housing, and

Whereas, during the 1990s, the Westgate Tenants Association began organizing with the goal of avoiding Westgate's gentrification and the resulting involuntary departures from their community, and

Whereas, in 2000, following considerable effort, a coalition of nonprofit organizations under the combined leadership of Housing Vermont and Westgate residents purchased the property, and the groups formed the new nonprofit Westgate Housing Inc. (WHI) to own and manage the property, and

Whereas, since December 2000, Housing Vermont and WHI have acted as partners in Westgate's ownership, retaining rents considerably below market rates and providing the residents with input in the community's management, and

Whereas, the percentage of the WHI Board's resident membership continued to increase, reaching 100 percent in 2009, the intended permanent organizational structure, and

Whereas, consequently, Westgate is one of the few resident-controlled rental housing developments in the United States, and

Whereas, the resulting residential pride has led to a vibrant community that takes responsibility for its operation and maintains a high level of neighborhood quality and civic engagement, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates Westgate Housing Inc. of Brattleboro on the nonprofit corporation's 25th anniversary, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to WHI.