

## Prayer vigil lifts up 'Homeowners' Bill of Rights'

Written by

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Clergy, faith leaders and concerned community members gathered outside the office of Sen. James Metzen in St. Paul to call on him to hear the 'Homeowners Bill of Rights' in the Senate Commerce Committee; a committee he chairs.

Throughout the vigil, 40 people taking different shifts left him personalized postcards encouraging him to "faithfully bring justice forth and hear the bill". Clergy met with Metzen's secretary to discuss his position on the hearing.

"In the meeting with Sen. Metzen's staff, I got the distinct impression that he'd like for everyone to just get along and work together," said Johnathan Zielske, Pastor at Hope Lutheran Church in St. Paul.

"In an ideal world, we all would. Yet power concedes nothing unless forced to and for much too long the big banks have held all the power. We need to give homeowners some basic rights to deal with the banks when they do not play fair. The senator cares, I get that, but does he care enough to give the people a hearing on this?"

Clergy and religious leaders are responding to Metzen's statements that he is unwilling to hear the bill until there is "peace in the valley," - meaning that those seeking to curb Minnesota's foreclosure crisis must come to an agreement with big banks and their lobbyists on key components to the bill. Meanwhile, those highly paid lobbyists continue to fill the halls of the capitol attempting to stop the bill from being heard, in Metzen's committee and elsewhere.

"As people of faith, we believe our policies must protect the economic well-being of our families rather than the concentrated wealth of a few," said Joseph Baring, Pastor at St. James AME in St. Paul.

"The Homeowner Bill of Rights will keep more families in their homes and work to level the playing field between lenders and homeowners."

Clergy and other concerned Minnesotans held vigil at Metzen's office throughout the day, bringing a citizen's lobby of concerned homeowners and neighbors seeking common sense solutions to a statewide problem of foreclosures.