

Date of Hearing: April 15, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Matt Haney, Chair

AB 2596 (Gipson) – As Introduced February 20, 2026

**SUBJECT:** Mobilehome parks: federally approved housing programs: compliance with state and local laws

**SUMMARY:** Requires a mobilehome park operator or owner to ensure ongoing compliance with applicable state laws, including the Unruh Civil Rights Act, and local ordinances if a mobilehome park operator or owner fails to comply with federal law or other federal requirements imposed in connection with a federally approved housing program that allows for limitations on age in a mobilehome park.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Establishes the Mobilehome Residency Law (MRL), which governs the rights, responsibilities, and relationships between mobilehome park management and park residents. (Civil Code Section (CIV) 798 *et seq.*)
- 2) Requires mobilehome park management, when the management proposes an amendment to the park's rules and regulations, to meet and consult with the homeowners in the park, their representatives, or both, after written notice has been given to all the homeowners in the park at least 10 days before the meeting, except as specified. (CIV 798.25(a))
- 3) Authorizes mobilehome park management, following the meet and consult process in 2) above, to implement the noticed amendment without the homeowner's consent upon written notice of not less than six months, with exceptions related to recreational facilities and changes to the MRL, as specified. (CIV 798.25(b))
- 4) Authorizes park management to require a prospective purchaser to comply with any rule or regulation limiting residency based on age requirements for housing for older persons, provided that the rule or regulation complies with the federal Fair Housing Act and implementing regulations. (CIV 798.76)
- 5) Establishes the Unruh Civil Rights Act, which provides that all persons in the state are free and equal and are entitled to the full and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, or services in all business establishments of every kind. Prohibits arbitrary discrimination by such establishments on the basis of characteristics including sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sexual orientation, citizenship, primary language, or immigration status. (CIV 51)
- 6) Prohibits a business establishment from discriminating in the sale or rental of housing based upon age, with exceptions for accommodations designed to meet the physical and social needs of senior citizens, as specified. (CIV 51.2(a))

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown. This bill is keyed non-fiscal by the Legislative Counsel.

**COMMENTS:**

***Author's statement:*** According to the author, "AB 2596 makes clear that failure to maintain federal documentation or failure to comply with federal age-verification requirements does not relieve a mobilehome park owner of the obligation to comply with California law and locally adopted senior-housing ordinances. Without this clarification, mobilehome park owners are attempting to use technical compliance gaps as a pretext to convert senior communities to all-ages parks, which leads to significant rent increases, the displacement of long-time residents, and the loss of critical affordable housing for older Californians. This bill restores legislative intent, reduces unnecessary litigation, preserves local land use authority, protects vulnerable seniors from economic displacement, and closes a loophole being exploited by bad actors."

***Mobilehomes in California:*** Mobilehomes are pre-fabricated homes that are designed to be able to be transported and moved between locations. In practice, however, significant costs associated with relocation make it much more difficult to move a mobilehome. Because of their method of construction, mobilehomes are one of the most affordable types of housing, both as a pathway to homeownership and for tenants renting park-owned mobilehomes. In the latter arrangement, the relationship between a park resident and park management is similar to that of a traditional tenant-landlord relationship in other housing types. The resident leases the park-owned mobilehome and the park management maintains the mobilehome and other facilities in the park. However, in the former example, the relationship is unique in that a resident may own their mobilehome yet still pay rent to park management to lease the space upon which the mobilehome rests. More than one million people live in California's approximately 4,500 mobilehome parks.

***Housing for Older Persons Act (HOPA):*** HOPA is a federal law enacted in 1995 that amended the Fair Housing Act. Its primary purpose is to clarify when housing communities may lawfully restrict residency based on age without violating prohibitions on familial status discrimination. Under HOPA, "housing for older persons" may limit occupancy to seniors, most commonly those aged 55 and older, if certain criteria are met. These include having at least 80% of occupied units with at least one resident aged 55 or older, maintaining policies that demonstrate an intent to operate as senior housing, and complying with age-verification requirements. The law streamlined prior rules by removing the requirement to provide significant services or facilities for seniors, instead focusing on occupancy thresholds and administrative compliance.

Mobilehome parks are among the types of housing that can qualify for HOPA's exemption, and many parks actively participate by designating themselves as "55+ communities." To do so, a mobilehome park must meet the same federal standards as other housing providers, including the 80% occupancy threshold and formal policies supporting age-restricted residency. In California, mobilehome parks are a significant portion of the senior housing market, and HOPA interacts with state laws that may impose additional requirements, like registration, signage, or local enforcement mechanisms. Participation in HOPA allows these parks to legally limit residency to older adults, but failure to consistently meet the federal criteria, like falling below the 80% threshold or not properly verifying ages, can result in loss of the exemption and potential liability under fair housing laws. Federal regulations adopted by the U.S. Department of Housing and

Urban Development under the HOPA law authorize cities to adopt local laws to protect senior housing in mobilehome parks.

***Unruh Civil Rights Act:*** The Unruh Civil Rights Act (Unruh Act) broadly prohibits arbitrary discrimination by business establishments in California, guaranteeing equal access regardless of protected characteristics, including those that courts have interpreted to include age. In the housing context, Civil Code Section 51.2 specifically provides that owners of housing accommodations may not discriminate based on age, but it expressly allows exceptions “as otherwise provided by law.” One such exemption is set forth in Civil Code Section 51.3, which permits certain qualifying senior housing developments to impose age restrictions without violating the Unruh Act. This exemption is narrowly tailored and applies only to housing that meets specified criteria, such as qualifying as “housing for older persons,” and that complies with specific requirements regarding occupancy thresholds, policies and procedures showing intent to operate as senior housing, and age verification practices. Together, these provisions reflect a balance between the Unruh Act’s general prohibition on age discrimination in housing and the Legislature’s intent to preserve legally compliant housing opportunities for older adults. Local jurisdictions can also, within reasonable exercise of their police powers, establish certain zones for mobilehome parks and establish types of uses and locations, including senior mobilehome parks.

***Senior mobilehome parks:*** Mobilehome parks represent one of a few affordable housing options left to senior citizens that permit exclusive residence in a detached dwelling by those individuals over the age of 55 years. Residents of senior mobilehome parks rely upon the representation of the park management and park owners that only seniors can purchase homes in those parks and obtain tenancies in those parks. Those rules are set forth in the leases or rental agreements. Owners of senior mobilehome parks can change their parks from senior mobilehome parks to all-age parks by changing park rules using the procedures outlined below.

***Changes to park rules and regulations:*** The MRL specifies procedural and substantive requirements that must be followed prior to changes to park rules and regulations. Management must provide written notice of a proposed rule change and an opportunity for homeowners to meet and consult regarding the change prior to its adoption. A rule change may take effect immediately, as to any owner, with the consent of that homeowner, or without the homeowner’s consent upon written notice no less than six months, with some exceptions. For example, changes to regulations applicable to recreational facilities may take effect without homeowner consent 60 days after written notice has been provided. Shorter notice (60 days) is permitted for changes relating to recreational facilities or where the rule change is required by a change in law. Existing law restricts management’s ability to impose certain new fees or charges that are not authorized by the rental agreement. These provisions operate within the broader framework of the MRL, which is deemed incorporated into every rental agreement (CIV 798.15), ensuring that rule changes are subject to standardized notice, participation, and enforceability requirements.

***This bill:*** This bill clarifies that mobilehome park operators or owners must comply with relevant state laws and local ordinances even if the park operator or owner fails to comply with federal requirements, like age-verification, in connection with a federally approved housing program. The co-sponsors of this bill note a number of disputes between mobilehome park residents and park operators around the state, including in the city of Petaluma. According to a local media

outlet<sup>1</sup>, operators of a mobilehome park in Petaluma announced that they intended to convert the mobilehome park to an all-ages park. Following the announcement, the City of Petaluma adopted an ordinance establishing an overlay district to provide assurances that existing senior mobilehome parks within the overlay district and future senior mobilehome parks will remain available to seniors. Another local media outlet reported the park operator's decision to continue advertising, and selling, to all ages and claimed that they have not been meeting requirements to maintain status as a senior park.<sup>2</sup> This bill seeks to clarify that if a park operator fails to meet the requirements of federal law, the park operator must still comply with applicable state laws and local ordinances.

***Arguments in Support:*** The California Association of Code Enforcement Officers, this bill's sponsor, writes in support: "This narrowly tailored measure addresses an urgent and growing gap in state law that is being exploited to destabilize senior mobilehome communities and displace vulnerable residents.

Across California, cities and counties have adopted zoning protections and rent stabilization measures to preserve certain mobilehome parks as affordable housing for seniors. These policies are critical for older Californians living on fixed incomes and have long been upheld and enforced through established local compliance mechanisms. However, recent business practices by certain mobilehome park operators have exposed a loophole in the interaction between federal age-verification requirements under the Housing for Older Persons Act (HOPA) and California's senior-housing zoning protections. Some park operators now argue that if they fail to meet federal age-verification requirements, they are no longer bound by state and local senior-only zoning requirements. This interpretation turns housing policy on its head — effectively allowing noncompliance with one legal obligation to excuse compliance with another.

While most operators comply in good faith, at least one large operator managing nearly 100 properties in California has attempted to use this technical defense to strip senior designation from parks. Their financial incentive is clear: converting senior parks to all-age occupancy allows for significantly higher rents, often at the expense of long-term senior residents living on fixed incomes. For many seniors, displacement from a mobilehome park is not merely disruptive — it can mean homelessness. Residents often own their homes but cannot afford relocation costs or market-rate housing alternatives. AB 2596 provides the clear statutory direction necessary to ensure California's senior housing protections function as intended."

The Golden State Manufactured-home Owners League, this bill's co-sponsor, writes in support: "AB 2596 clarifies that mobilehome park owners cannot use their failure to comply with any federal-approved housing program requirements, including the Housing for Older Persons Act of 1995 (HOPA) — a federal law that amends the Fair Housing Act to allow 55+ communities — to then ignore or exempt themselves from state and local laws passed in California. By explicitly stating that park owners must comply with the Mobilehome Residency Law (MRL), the Unruh Civil Rights Act, and other applicable state laws and local ordinances, AB 2596 ensures mobilehome residents are protected.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.petalumanews.com/2023/10/04/petaluma-designates-5-mobile-home-parks-for-seniors-only/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.pressdemocrat.com/2025/11/25/petaluma-mobile-home-park-rules-court-fight/>

This is not a new right, but a reaffirmation of our existing rights, and a necessary clarification to prevent any misinterpretation or misapplication of law or circumstance where park owners, who participate in federally-approved housing programs, can pick and choose when California laws apply to them. Passing AB 2596 sends a clear message that California is committed to protecting all of its mobilehome residents, especially those in vulnerable housing situations.”

*Arguments in opposition:* None on file.

*Double-referred:* This bill is double-referred to the Assembly Committee on Judiciary, where it will be heard should it pass out of this committee.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

California Association of Code Enforcement Officers (Sponsor)  
Golden State Manufactured-home Owners League (Co-sponsor)

**Opposition**

None on file.

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