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Senate Committee - Senator Bob Gardner

Senator Gardner: Thank you for having me here today.

I leased my apartment to a young single Mom with a 7 year old son. One day she texted me and asked if her cousin had settlers rights, and I responded that I had never heard of such a thing. I learned really fast.

Her cousin had offered to stay and help with the her son since she was working 2 jobs. The cousin started using drugs so the tenant asked her to leave. She refused because of her "settlers rights". I told the tenant to call the police and when they come, to ask them to let me talk to them.

The police came, then told her that her cousin had a right to live there; she gave the phone to me and I asked him "how was that possible"? He said the cousin had residential rights because she had been there 14 days. He asked me "Haven't you ever invited anyone over for Thanksgiving Dinner?" I replied "sure but they leave afterwards". He said "if they don't you have to go to court to evict them".

I called my attorney and was told to post a 3 day eviction notice listing the tenant and all other occupants. I did and 3 days later, the tenant left and had her foster mother give me her only key to the apartment, However, the squatter and her full grown pit bull stayed, and then she allowed 3 more females to move in, one just out of jail on drug charges.

My attorney posted the court paper at the apartment. The squatters stayed! Then my attorney went to court, but none of the occupants showed up. The squatters refused to leave, had no key, but were going in and out through the window. The neighbors called the police, but we were told that is not trespassing or breaking and entering because they have rights. With Eric Ross and Channel 5's help the squatters finally left.

I have all the expense of the legal fees, plus all the clean up and repairs caused by them, (over \$5000 total) **I think it is ridiculous that the law allows someone who does not sign any papers and does not pay out any funds to take advantage of a tenant or a property owner.**