

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY APRIL 16, 2016 7:47 PM

# Hundreds protest against condo fraud in South Florida

## HIGHLIGHTS

Condo owners marched Saturday in Doral

They demand legal reforms to protect owners and stop abuses

They also asked local authorities to support the reforms





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More than 250 South Florida condo residents marched Saturday through the streets of Doral to demand that authorities take steps to stop a wave of fraud hitting their neighborhoods.

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## MIAMI-DADE LEADERS TO TACKLE CONDOMINIUM FRAUD IN TALLAHASSEE

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With posters, flags and whistles, the group of protesters marched through downtown Doral shouting about alleged abuses by their board of directors and the private companies hired to

manage the condominiums.

“We want our demands heard in Tallahassee,” said William Mendieta, one of the organizers of the march and resident of the Las Vistas condos in Doral. “We have left behind apathy and indifference to unite with other condos so that together we can make one request: Justice!”

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## CONDO OWNERS FACE FINANCIAL LOSSES UNDER RECEIVERS’ WATCH

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It was the fifth public protest since an investigation by el Nuevo Herald and Univision 23 in March revealed the systematic frauds facing condos in Miami-Dade County — including at least 84

fraudulent votes in November election for the board of directors at The Beach Club condos in Fontainebleau Park, and a fraudulent bidding process in which a company won a \$5.2 million contract in a competition against two front companies.

The protest involved residents of condos in several municipalities in the county, including Aventura, North Miami Beach, Kendall and Homestead. Condo owners from Broward County also participated in the march.

ADVERTISING



Mendieta said authorities have started to react to the condo owners' complaints and are proposing the organization of a special group of detectives from different police departments in the county to investigate complaints of condo fraud. But Mendieta added that the campaign should go further and involve legal changes in Tallahassee.

State Rep. Jose Felix Diaz, head of the Miami-Dade delegation in Tallahassee, in fact is working on a broad reform to the condo laws that he expects to submit in November. County Mayor Carlos Gimenez last week promised to go to Tallahassee to support the Diaz efforts.

"We want authorities to fulfill their promises," said Mendieta. "We don't want this to remain a promise during an election year."

The protesters asked for the support of more elected officials.

"Where are our mayors and commissioners? Why are they not marching with us? This affects thousands of families," shouted Sol Barquero. "We want a solution! Out with corruption!"

For Katherine Castro, president of The Beach Club, the protest Saturday marks an awakening of condo owners who have been abused for years with the complicity or indifference of authorities.

"This march is the beginning of what could be the end of the abuse of working families who find themselves without protection" in their condos, said Castro. "It is time for authorities to confront the companies that manipulate the system to fill their pockets."

Janvier Villar, an owner at the Buckley Towers condo in North Miami Beach, said she was angry with the inaction by authorities in the face of complaints about fraud in the elections for its board of directors in December. A group of owners is pushing to recall the board members elected in the balloting.

Ana Gutierrez, 74, who lives in a Doral condo, said he took part in the protest to ask other condo owners for advice. She and several others at the march exchanged information about the best way to document and submit complaints about condo fraud to authorities

“Because I asked for information, they threatened me, they even vandalized my car and my house,” said Gutierrez. “I pay the maintenance and everything is dirty. It’s a disaster. I don’t know where the money goes. I have a right to know.”

Aymara Sorhegui, who lives in the Park East condos in Fontainebleau said it was important that residents of different condos unite to push their demands.

“This march is important because it has united us, condo resident, to fight together for changes and stop the abuses that we have been suffering at the hands of corrupt organization,” said Sorhegui.



# Marchan contra el fraude en condominios en el sur de la Florida

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**Joanne Kuder**

This is criminal activity that elected Officials should address and confront. These Homeowners also need to organize a recall of all the politicians known to have shown indifference to their concerns.

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**Michael Lehman**

The politicians are part of this criminal activity

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Michael Lehman and anyone who doesn't believe that is an idiot

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Fraud in South Florida? I'm shocked!

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**Jorge Martinez**

Condemonium!

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**Amoray Ricart** · University of Miami

They need to investigate Lago Grande in Hialeah who is also managed by Florida's Property Mgmt now known as Sinshine Management. The fraud there is unbelievable. For one they haven't held elections in over 10 years. The place is disgusting nothing gets done. The roofs were done in 2011 by guess who? Taylor Roofing who's owner was recently arrested. And guess what? The roofs are leaking and the management company is doing NOTHING about it. There's gangs, drug dealing inside the community.

The Board, the Management Company and all the Vendors they do business with are thieves !!

Like · Reply ·  1 · 6 hrs


**Tina G Adams** · Fort Lauderdale, Florida

And it's not just condo associations, homeowner associations have similar problems and even less protection.

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**Betty Betancourt Delfino** · Works at Retired from the State of Florida

One of the Worst: SERENITY POINTE in Miami Lakes.

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**Jose L. Cano**

Homeowners demand legal empowerment to confront the abuses from white collar criminals in many of the condo and hoa Boards in South Florida.

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**International Park 1**

They need to investigate the lawyers as well. Condo management companies and the lawyers they work with have incestious relationship that do nothing more than hurt owners. A lawyer who is supposed to be the condo's legal aide will never go against a management company even if that management company is doing illegal things. Management companies and Lawyers are in all in together. So if management companies are being corrupt so are lawyers. Or just ask the lawyer from international park 1 who let a receiver mismanage funds and has done NOTHING to seek relief from her for international park 1. This receiver was found to ask for more money than allowed by the courts but yet the lawyer for IP1 does nothing why? The answer is simple the lawyer and the management company are in bed together and asking to relief for IP 1 all of their behind the door deals will be revealed.

Like · Reply · 1 · 4 hrs



**Doyle Crum** · Parkin High School

Why are some of these signs in spanish? That should tell you your problem right there. They shouldn't have a protest here, protest in their own country. If you don't like it leave.

Like · Reply · 2 · 3 hrs



**Bill Harmen** · World Traveler at Retired

You're a ridiculous idiot. Why don't you go home and stfu.

Like · Reply · 5 · 2 hrs



**Bill Cook** · Boston, Massachusetts

Actualyly Doyle, YOU are the "problem right there". These people pay their cash, which you have no problem taking from them without sending them "home", and they deserve every right YOU do. If you don't like our laws and constitutional rights, maybe YOU should find a new place to live.

Like · Reply · 5 · 2 hrs



**Wayne Morris**

We are absentee owners of a condo in Plantation and suffer from a condo management company that acts if the owners work for them and our condo board sits there mute and when you ask for a list of the board members and their contact information the silence is deafening.

Like · Reply · 2 · 3 hrs



**Tina G Adams** · Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Part of the problem is homeowners don't want to be involved. Speak up and get on the

board yourself.

Like · Reply · 35 mins

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