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**HOUSE BILL 2864**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2018 Regular Session**

**By** Representative Eslick

AN ACT Relating to preventing fires in rental dwelling units; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that over the last ten years, Washington has seen an increasing shift from homeowners to renters in major metropolitan areas and smaller cities and towns. Many of these rentals are in low density, single-family homes, or low density multifamily buildings. As more renters enter the market, rental costs have increased by over thirty percent, forcing people to look for more affordable places to live. With new rental units coming on the market in former single-family homes, many do not meet current fire safety standards. In Washington, four out of five fire deaths occur in residential dwelling units. Smoke alarms have become such a common feature in homes that it is easy to take them for granted, but properly installed and maintained smoke alarms save lives. Despite requirements for landlords to equip rental dwelling units with smoke detection devices, and tenants to maintain smoke detectors in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations, tragedies still occur.

Therefore, the legislature directs the Washington director of fire protection to investigate ways to prevent fire deaths in rental dwellings, educate landlords and tenants regarding their responsibilities, develop possible criminal penalties, evaluate insurance certification requirements or changes to the building code, and other possible programs or funding that would improve installation and maintenance of smoke detectors in rental apartments and single-family homes.

The director of fire protection must form a task force of stakeholders including but not limited to landlords of residential units, tenants, local governments, firefighters, representatives from home builders and construction trades, the insurance industry, and a nonprofit that provides free smoke detectors and installation. The task force shall choose its chair from among its membership. The director of fire protection must convene the initial meeting of the task force. The task force must allow for public comments. The task force shall update the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1, 2019. The task force shall report its findings and recommendations to the governor and the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1, 2020.

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