

RCW 49.60.227 Declaratory judgment action to strike discriminatory provision of real property contract—Restrictive covenant modification document as alternative.

(1) (a) If a written instrument contains a provision that is void by reason of RCW 49.60.224, the owner, occupant, or tenant of the property which is subject to the provision or the homeowners' association board may cause the provision to be stricken from the public records by bringing an action in the superior court in the county in which the property is located. The action shall be an in rem, declaratory judgment action whose title shall be the description of the property. The necessary party to the action shall be the owner, occupant, or tenant of the property or any portion thereof. The person bringing the action shall pay a fee set under RCW 36.18.012.

(b) If the court finds that any provisions of the written instrument are void under RCW 49.60.224, it shall enter an order striking the void provisions from the public records and eliminating the void provisions from the title or lease of the property described in the complaint.

(i) A complete copy of any document affected by the order shall be made an exhibit to the order and the order shall identify each document by recording number and date of recordation and set forth verbatim the void provisions to be struck from such document. The order shall include a certified copy of each document, upon which the court has physically redacted the void provisions.

(ii) The person bringing the action may obtain and deliver a certified copy of the order to the office of the county auditor or, in charter counties, the county official charged with the responsibility for recording instruments in the county records, in the county where the property is located.

(iii) The auditor shall record the documents prepared by the court. An image of each document so corrected shall be placed in the public records. Each corrected document shall contain the following information on the first page or a cover page prepared pursuant to RCW 65.04.047: The auditor's file number or book and page of the original document, a notation that the original document was corrected pursuant to this section, the cause number of the court action, and the date the order was entered.

(iv) The auditor or official shall update the index of each original document referenced in the order with the auditor's file number of the corrected document. Further, the index will note that the original record is no longer the primary official public record and is removed from the chain of title pursuant to the court order.

(v) The original document or image and subsequent records of such actions shall be separately maintained in the county's records and, at the auditor's or official's discretion, the original document or image may also be transferred to the secretary of state archives division to be preserved for historical or archival purposes.

(2) (a) As an alternative to the judicial procedure set forth in subsection (1) of this section, the owner of property subject to a written instrument that contains a provision that is void by reason of RCW 49.60.224 may record a restrictive covenant modification document with the county auditor, or in charter counties the county official charged with the responsibility for recording instruments in the county records, in the county in which the property is located.

(b) The modification document shall contain a recording reference to the original written instrument.

(c) The modification document must state, in part:

"The referenced original written instrument contains discriminatory provisions that are void and unenforceable under RCW 49.60.224 and federal law. This document strikes from the referenced original instrument all provisions that are void and unenforceable under law."

(d) The effective date of the modification document shall be the same as the effective date of the original written instrument.

(e) If the owner causes to be recorded a modification document that contains modifications not authorized by this section, the county auditor or recording officer shall not incur liability for recording the document. Any liability that may result is the sole responsibility of the owner who caused the recordation.

(f) No filing or recording fees or otherwise authorized surcharges shall be required for the filing of a modification document pursuant to this section.

(3) For the purposes of this section, "restrictive covenant modification document" or "modification document" means a standard form developed and designed by the Washington state association of county auditors. [2021 c 256 § 4; 2018 c 65 § 1; 2006 c 58 § 3; 1995 c 292 § 18; 1993 c 69 § 10; 1987 c 56 § 2.]

Findings—Intent—Application—2021 c 256: See notes following RCW 49.60.525.

Effective date—2018 c 65: "Section 1 of this act takes effect January 1, 2019." [2018 c 65 § 3.]

Finding—Intent—2006 c 58: See note following RCW 64.38.028.

Severability—1993 c 69: See note following RCW 49.60.030.

Intent—1987 c 56 § 2: "The legislature finds that some real property deeds and other written instruments contain discriminatory covenants and restrictions that are contrary to public policy and are void. The continued existence of these covenants and restrictions is repugnant to many property owners and diminishes the free enjoyment of their property. It is the intent of RCW 49.60.227 to allow property owners to remove all remnants of discrimination from their deeds." [1987 c 56 § 1.]