
Judiciary Committee

HB 1647

Title: An act relating to landlord responsibilities regarding keys to leased premises.

Brief Description: Requiring landlords to maintain and safeguard keys to leased premises.

Sponsors: Representatives Tarleton, Haler, Riccelli, Maxwell, Sawyer, Scott, Bergquist, Farrell, Morrell, Jinkins, Roberts and Pollet.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires residential landlords to maintain and safeguard with utmost care any master key or duplicate keys to the leased premises.
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Hearing Date: 2/14/13

Staff: Cece Clynch (786-7195).

Background:

The Residential Landlord-Tenant Act (RLTA) regulates the creation of residential tenancies and the relationship between landlords and tenants of residential dwelling units. The RLTA establishes rights and duties of both tenants and landlords, procedures for the parties to enforce their rights, and remedies for violations of the RLTA.

There are a few provisions in the RLTA that speak directly to duties related to locks and keys:

- Landlords are specifically required to provide reasonably adequate locks and furnish keys to the tenant.
- Under some circumstances, if the landlord fails to carry out statutory repair duties, the tenant is authorized to contract for the repairs. If the tenant does so, the tenant is specifically required to promptly provide the landlord with a key to any new or replaced locks.
- If a tenant is a victim of sexual assault, stalking, or unlawful harassment, there are provisions that allow the tenant to change or add locks at his or her own expense. The

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tenant must provide the landlord with a copy of the key to the new locks, unless the tenant has a valid protection order against the owner of the premises or an employee or agent of the landlord or owner, in which case the requirement to supply a key takes effect at such time as the protective order expires or the tenant vacates the premises.

- In the event that a tenant obtains a court order granting him or her possession of a dwelling unit to the exclusion of another cotenant, and furnishes the order to the landlord with a request for a lock change or reconfiguration at the tenant's expense, the landlord must comply with the request and is prohibited from providing copies of the new key to the cotenant restrained or excluded. A landlord that replaces or reconfigures the lock, is held harmless from liability for any damages that result directly from the lock change.

Summary of Bill:

Landlords are required to maintain and safeguard with utmost care any master key or duplicate keys to the leased premises.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.