

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESHB 1647

C 35 L 13

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Requiring landlords to maintain and safeguard keys to dwelling units.

Sponsors: House Committee on Judiciary (originally sponsored by Representatives Tarleton, Haler, Riccelli, Maxwell, Sawyer, Scott, Bergquist, Farrell, Morrell, Jinkins, Roberts and Pollet).

House Committee on Judiciary
Senate Committee on Financial Institutions, Housing & Insurance

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.

Several provisions in the RLTA speak directly to duties related to locks and keys:

- Landlords must provide reasonably adequate locks and furnish keys to the tenant.
- Under some circumstances, if a landlord fails to carry out statutory repair duties, the tenant may contract for the repairs. If the tenant does so, the tenant must 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, the tenant may change or add locks at his or her own expense. The 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.
- If 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.

Summary:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Landlords are required to maintain and safeguard with reasonable care any master key or duplicate keys to the dwelling unit.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	98	0
Senate	42	5

Effective: July 28, 2013