H-2329.1

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**HOUSE BILL 2016**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2024 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives McClintock, Couture, Ryu, Waters, Senn, Callan, Doglio, and Reeves

AN ACT Relating to allowing certain minors to contract for housing and utilities; adding a new section to chapter 26.28 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that adolescents are without stable housing due to familial conflicts, financial strain, or other unforeseen circumstances. The inability to sign rental agreements presents a significant barrier in a system meant to be compassionate and flexible and can prevent youths from accessing safe shelter. Court delays and an inability to access services also prevent youths from accessing shelter through foster care or other state systems. Therefore, the legislature intends to allow unaccompanied minors to sign rental agreements in order to prevent unnecessary youth homelessness.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 26.28 RCW to read as follows:

(1) A minor who is at least 16 years old and living apart from a parent, guardian, or legal custodian may contract for a residential dwelling unit and utility services to the unit.

(2) A contract or lease executed by a minor under this section is binding and may not be voided or disaffirmed by the minor due to the minor's age or status as a minor. The consent of a parent, guardian, or legal custodian is not necessary for a minor to contract for a residential dwelling unit or utility services to the unit. A parent, guardian, or legal custodian is not liable for a contract by a minor for a residential dwelling unit or utility services unless the parent, guardian, or legal custodian is a party to the contract or enters a contract as a guarantor for the minor's debt.

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