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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2275**

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**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2024 Regular Session**

**By** House Housing (originally sponsored by Representatives Reeves and Morgan)

READ FIRST TIME 01/31/24.

1 AN ACT Relating to senior independent living facilities; adding a  
2 new section to chapter 19.27 RCW; adding a new chapter to Title 70  
3 RCW; and providing an expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 19.27  
6 RCW to read as follows:

7 (1) The legislature finds that the unique needs of independent  
8 senior citizens warrant residential building requirements for senior  
9 independent housing that are different than those that apply to  
10 traditional, nonage-restricted multifamily residential developments.

11 (2) The state building code council shall convene a technical  
12 advisory group for the purpose of recommending amendments to the  
13 rules or codes applicable to senior independent housing to enhance  
14 building accessibility and safety for independent senior citizens and  
15 persons with disabilities. The technical advisory group shall strive  
16 to align the rules or codes applicable to senior independent housing  
17 with the rules or codes applicable to assisted living facilities,  
18 nursing homes, long-term care facilities, and other similar living  
19 arrangements. When developing the recommendations, the technical  
20 advisory group must consult with experts in public health, fire and  
21 life safety, and building accessibility.

1 (3) The technical advisory group shall provide its  
2 recommendations to the state building code council in time for the  
3 council to adopt or amend rules or codes as necessary for  
4 implementation in the 2024 code adoption cycle. The state building  
5 code council shall take action to adopt additions and amendments to  
6 rules or codes as necessary by July 1, 2026.

7 (4) For the purposes of this section, "senior independent  
8 housing" means any residential housing that is advertised,  
9 maintained, designed, or constructed for the express or implied  
10 purpose of providing housing for persons 55 years of age or older who  
11 are independent and do not require assistance with activities of  
12 daily living. Senior independent housing is typically designed to  
13 enable seniors to live on their own, but with the security and  
14 convenience of community living, including recreational, educational,  
15 and social activities. "Senior independent housing" does not include  
16 facilities that provide medical care or assistance with activities of  
17 daily living, such as assisted living facilities, nursing homes,  
18 long-term care facilities, or other similar living arrangements.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply  
20 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires  
21 otherwise.

22 (1) "Department" means the department of commerce.

23 (2) "Resident" means any person who lives in a senior independent  
24 housing establishment.

25 (3) "Senior independent housing" means any residential housing  
26 that is advertised, maintained, designed, or constructed for the  
27 express or implied purpose of providing housing for persons 55 years  
28 of age or older who are independent and do not require assistance  
29 with activities of daily living. Senior independent housing is  
30 typically designed to enable seniors to live on their own, but with  
31 the security and convenience of community living, including  
32 recreational, educational, and social activities. "Senior independent  
33 housing" does not include facilities that provide medical care or  
34 assistance with activities of daily living, such as assisted living  
35 facilities, nursing homes, long-term care facilities, or other  
36 similar living arrangements.

37 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) In addition to any other rights  
38 provided by law, residents in senior independent housing have the

1 rights provided in this section. The rights provided in this section  
2 are minimum rights guaranteed to all residents of senior independent  
3 housing and are not intended to diminish any other rights provided in  
4 local, state, or federal laws.

5 (2) A resident in a senior independent housing establishment has  
6 the right to:

7 (a) Be free of interference, coercion, discrimination, and  
8 reprisal from the housing establishment in exercising the resident's  
9 rights;

10 (b) Be treated respectfully by management, employees, and staff  
11 of the housing establishment;

12 (c) Install safety and security devices, including cameras, at  
13 the entrance to the resident's individual living unit or within the  
14 unit;

15 (d) Organize, attend, and hold meetings open to any and all  
16 residents of the housing establishment at reasonable hours and times;

17 (e) Communicate with and receive a timely response from the  
18 manager of the senior independent housing establishment or the  
19 manager's designee at any time of day, including after hours and on  
20 weekends, in case of emergencies; and

21 (f) Provide anonymous suggestions and feedback to the management,  
22 employees, and staff of the senior independent housing establishment  
23 through methods such as suggestion boxes in common areas.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) The department shall study and report  
25 on the possibility of creating an office of senior housing within the  
26 department as described in this section.

27 (2) The purpose of the office of senior housing will be to lead  
28 and coordinate efforts related to providing oversight for senior  
29 independent housing and help ensure that senior independent housing  
30 establishments comply with any relevant local, state, and federal  
31 laws and regulations related to building accessibility and safety,  
32 reasonable accommodations, landlord-tenant duties, lease enforcement,  
33 and any other relevant resident rights including, but not limited to,  
34 the following:

35 (a) The residential landlord-tenant act in chapter 59.18 RCW;

36 (b) The law against discrimination in chapter 49.60 RCW;

37 (c) The state building code in chapter 19.27 RCW;

38 (d) The senior independent housing resident rights provided in  
39 section 3 of this act;

1 (e) The federal fair housing act (42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.);  
2 (f) The federal Americans with disabilities act (42 U.S.C. 12101  
3 et seq.); and  
4 (g) Any other relevant state and federal laws and regulations.  
5 (3) The office of senior housing should function as a single  
6 point of contact for residents who have complaints about a senior  
7 independent housing establishment or need assistance with enforcing  
8 their rights.  
9 (4) The office of senior housing should, at minimum, have the  
10 duty and power to:  
11 (a) Provide education to residents and potential residents about  
12 their rights and responsibilities;  
13 (b) Collect resident complaints and other relevant data, and  
14 report this information to appropriate local, state, and federal  
15 agencies on a regular basis; and  
16 (c) Directly enforce or help coordinate enforcement of the  
17 relevant local, state, and federal laws and regulations described in  
18 subsection (2) of this section with the appropriate local, state, and  
19 federal agencies.  
20 (5) In studying the possibility of creating an office of senior  
21 housing, the department shall consult with appropriate stakeholders  
22 and any local, state, or federal agencies with responsibilities  
23 related to senior housing and aging issues including, but not limited  
24 to, the department of social and health services, the aging and long-  
25 term support administration within the department of social and  
26 health services, the department of health, the office of the state  
27 long-term care ombuds, the Washington state human rights commission,  
28 the consumer protection division of the attorney general's office,  
29 the state council on aging, local area agencies on aging, the United  
30 States department of housing and urban development, and the United  
31 States department of justice.  
32 (6) By July 1, 2025, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the  
33 department shall submit a report to the appropriate committees of the  
34 legislature that includes information and recommendations about  
35 options, benefits, risks, and costs associated with establishing an  
36 office of senior housing within the department.  
37 (7) This section expires July 1, 2026.

1        NEW SECTION.        **Sec. 5.**        Sections 2 through 4 of this act  
2        constitute a new chapter in Title 70 RCW.

--- **END** ---