
HOUSE BILL 2345

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2024 Regular Session

By Representatives Barkis, Walen, Hutchins, Chambers, Connors, Jacobsen, and Cheney

Read first time 01/12/24. Referred to Committee on Housing.

1 AN ACT Relating to preparing for revisions to the residential
2 landlord-tenant act by creating a task force and establishing
3 prohibitions on the adoption of new local regulations on the
4 residential landlord-tenant relationship during the task force study
5 period; creating new sections; and providing expiration dates.

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

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that the dynamic
8 nature of the residential rental market in Washington state
9 necessitates a thorough reevaluation of the existing residential
10 landlord-tenant act. Recognizing the fundamental importance of stable
11 housing for individuals and communities, it is evident that changes
12 in societal and economic conditions may have impacted the
13 effectiveness of the residential landlord-tenant act. Furthermore,
14 differences in local ordinances have prevented consistent delivery
15 and implementation of state law. The legislature acknowledges the
16 need to adapt and enhance the current regulatory framework to address
17 emerging challenges, ensure fair treatment for both landlords and
18 tenants, and uphold the principles of housing stability and equity.

19 (2) Therefore, the legislature intends to establish a task force
20 dedicated to a comprehensive study of the residential landlord-tenant
21 act. This task force will undertake a meticulous review of the

1 existing legislation, analyzing its provisions, enforcement
2 mechanisms, and practical implications. By soliciting input from
3 diverse stakeholders, including landlords, tenants, legal experts,
4 housing advocates, and industry representatives, the task force aims
5 to gain a nuanced understanding of the contemporary issues within the
6 residential rental sector. The legislature intends for this
7 collaborative effort to result in evidence-based recommendations for
8 potential amendments or enhancements to the residential landlord-
9 tenant act, fostering a balanced and fair relationship between
10 landlords and tenants while addressing the evolving needs of
11 Washington's housing landscape.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1)(a) A task force on revising the
13 residential landlord-tenant act is established, with members as
14 provided in this subsection.

15 (i) The president of the senate shall appoint one member from
16 each of the two largest caucuses of the senate.

17 (ii) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint
18 one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of
19 representatives.

20 (iii) The president of the senate and the speaker of the house of
21 representatives jointly shall appoint the following members:

22 (A) One representative of the for-profit residential property
23 management and operations industry specializing in management of
24 residential properties with 20 or more rental units;

25 (B) Two representatives of the residential property management
26 and operations industry specializing in management of residential
27 properties with between one and four rental units, with one
28 representative from east of the crest of the Cascade mountains and
29 one representative from west of the crest of the Cascade mountains;

30 (C) One representative of the nonprofit residential property
31 management and operations industry;

32 (D) One representative of the real estate sales profession;

33 (E) One representative of the for-profit housing development
34 industry;

35 (F) One representative of the nonprofit housing development
36 industry;

37 (G) One representative of a statewide tenant legal aid
38 association;

1 (H) One representative from a tenant-based organization
2 representing historically underserved populations;

3 (I) One representative of public housing authorities created
4 under chapter 35.82 RCW;

5 (J) Two representatives of the association of Washington cities,
6 with one representative from a city that is located east of the crest
7 of the Cascade mountains and one representative from a city that is
8 located west of the crest of the Cascade mountains; and

9 (K) The director of the department of commerce or the director's
10 designee.

11 (b) The task force shall choose its chair or cochairs from among
12 its membership. The legislative membership shall convene the initial
13 meeting of the task force.

14 (2) The task force shall study and review the residential
15 landlord-tenant act, chapter 59.18 RCW and any related laws. The task
16 force shall make recommendations regarding potential updates to the
17 law in issue areas including, but not limited to, the following:

18 (a) Rent increase limits and rent stabilization policies;

19 (b) Security deposits and fees;

20 (c) Court processes related to the residential landlord-tenant
21 act, including the eviction process;

22 (d) Required notices;

23 (e) Just cause eviction;

24 (f) Lease compliance;

25 (g) A rental registry;

26 (h) Local control;

27 (i) Access to rental assistance;

28 (j) Liability for violations of the residential landlord-tenant
29 act;

30 (k) Tenant screening and access to rental housing; and

31 (l) Any other issues that the task force deems relevant.

32 (3) Staff support for the task force must be provided by the
33 department of commerce.

34 (4) The task force may contract with additional persons who have
35 specific technical expertise if the expertise is necessary to carry
36 out the mandates of the study. The task force may enter into such a
37 contract only if an appropriation is specifically provided for this
38 purpose.

39 (5) Legislative members of the task force are reimbursed for
40 travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative

1 members are not entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses if they
2 are elected officials or are participating on behalf of an employer,
3 governmental entity, or other organization. Any reimbursement for
4 other nonlegislative members is subject to chapter 43.03 RCW.

5 (6) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
6 specific purpose, the expenses of the task force must be paid by the
7 department of commerce.

8 (7) By December 1, 2025, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036,
9 the task force shall report its findings and recommendations to the
10 appropriate committees of the legislature.

11 (8) This section expires July 1, 2026.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) For a period of 24 months following
13 the effective date of this section, a city may not enact or create a
14 new ordinance, development regulation, zoning regulation, official
15 control, policy, or administrative practice that regulates the
16 residential landlord-tenant relationship under chapter 59.18 RCW.

17 (2) This section expires July 1, 2026.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) For a period of 24 months following
19 the effective date of this section, a county may not enact or create
20 a new ordinance, development regulation, zoning regulation, official
21 control, policy, or administrative practice which regulates the
22 residential landlord-tenant relationship under chapter 59.18 RCW.

23 (2) This section expires July 1, 2026.

--- END ---