

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5661

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As of February 14, 2025

**Title:** An act relating to creating consistency in housing.

**Brief Description:** Creating consistency in housing.

**Sponsors:** Senators Goehner, Gildon and Chapman.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Housing: 2/14/25.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Preempts counties, cities and towns from enacting, maintaining or enforcing ordinances or other provisions which regulate any agreement between a landlord and a tenant under the Residential Landlord-Tenant Act and the Manufactured/Mobile Home Landlord-Tenant Act with certain exceptions.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

**Staff:** Bill Fosbre (786-7531)

**Background:** Residential Landlord-Tenant Act. The Residential Landlord-Tenant Act (RLTA) governs the legal duties, rights, and remedies related to any rental agreement between a landlord and a tenant for a residential dwelling unit.

Manufactured/Mobile Home Landlord-Tenant Act. The Manufactured/Mobile Home Landlord-Tenant Act (MHLTA) governs the legal duties, rights, and remedies related to any rental agreement between a landlord and a tenant for a manufactured or mobile home lot within a manufactured or mobile home park where the tenant has no ownership interest in the property or in the association that owns the property.

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

No county, city, town, or municipality of any class may enact, maintain, or enforce ordinances or other provisions that regulate matters related to providing tenants or qualified tenant organization an opportunity to compete to purchase a manufactured or mobile home community when the owner intends to sell the community.

This prohibition includes:

- the notice given;
- the process used to sell or transfer the community;
- exceptions to the sale or transfer; and
- the obligations of the community owner to certify certain items to preserve the marketability of title to community.

Local laws and ordinances that regulate these matters are preempted and repealed, regardless of the nature of the code, charter, or home rule status of such city, town, county, or municipality, except for those local laws already in effect before May 1, 2023.

State Preemption Related to Regulating Rent Charged. No county, city or town of any class may enact, maintain, or enforce ordinances or other provisions which regulate the amount of rent to be charged for single-family or multiple-unit residential rental structures or sites other than properties in public ownership, under public management, or properties providing low-income rental housing under joint public-private agreements for the financing or provision of such low-income rental housing.

**Summary of Bill:** No county, city or town of any class may enact, maintain, or enforce ordinances or other provisions which regulate any agreement between a landlord and tenant entered under the RLTA or MHLTA for single-family or multiple-unit residential rental structures or sites other than in public ownership, under public management, or property providing low-income rental housing under joint public-private agreements for financing or provision of such low-income rental housing.

This act does not prohibit a county, city, or town from entering into agreements with private persons that regulate or control the amount of rent to be charged for rental properties.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: The bill adds predictability and consistency when people are renting housing across the state. There's a lot of variation with the different jurisdictions and the predictability comes from people who are actually the owners

of the units to know exactly what the requirements are for each jurisdiction.

This bill ensures a unified and stable statewide approach that will create fairness and predictability for both housing providers and residents, reducing legal confusion and encouraging much needed investment in housing.

This bill takes a step towards stabilizing the rental housing market, encouraging investment, and supporting long term solutions to Washington's housing challenges. This legislation is invaluable to creating clarity and a more sustainable housing environment across the state.

The current patchwork of local rental regulations is creating significant financial strain on housing providers, increasing costs that ultimately affect both property operations and renters. Every time a new ordinance is passed, rental housing owners must adapt, update lease agreements and modify operations in multiple jurisdictions. The constant adjustment is costly and inefficient, diverting resources away from maintaining and improving rental housing.

The bill ensures a predictable and stable environment for developers and investors who bring housing projects to fruition.

CON: SB 5661 does not take into consideration the needs of renters and the economic circumstances underlying local rental markets, which vary significantly across the state. This bill would take away local authority and is destabilizing for many renters who benefit from local protections. The RLTA establishes the basic rights and limitations that apply to landlord tenant relationships, local jurisdictions must be allowed to improve that baseline to best serve their own populations.

Seattle King County Coalition on Homelessness are opposed to this bill. Local services are designed to keep people out of homelessness. They are tailored to the jurisdiction in which they live. The service delivery model in Seattle is very different than the service delivery model in Yakima. Tenant protections that exist in those two places should reflect that variance. The bill should consider a more nuanced and regional-based approach.

This is a one sided bill seeking to remove all critical local protections across the state that keep people safely housed.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Keith Goehner, Prime Sponsor; Carter Nelson, Washington Multifamily Housing Association; Alex Harrington , NAIOP Washington State; Malia Moreno; Daniel Klemme, Rental Housing Association of Washington; GORDON HAGGERTY; Bruce Becker; Sheri Druckman; Deborah Reiswig.

CON: Michele Thomas, Washington Low Income Housing Alliance; Sarah Nagy, Columbia Legal Services; Caroline Hardy, Secretary of AMHO and Leisure Manor Tenants Association; Ishbel Dickens, Assoc of Manufactured Home Owners; Melanie Smith, Seattle

/ King County Coalition on Homelessness.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** PRO: CHUNG-YEE LIN.

CON: Sarah Moore; Jeffrey Reynolds, ALL AMERICAN PROPERTY SERVICES, LLC; Kerri Burnside, Bellingham Tenants Union; Josie Tracy, Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility; Tad Sommerville; Guinevere Berg; Michael Gustavson; Matthew Lang, National Organization for Women - WA.