SENATE BILL REPORT
SB 5844

As of January 22, 2026

Title: An act relating to the delivery, execution, acceptance, and provisions of individual storage space rental agreements and modifying the use of individual storage spaces after notice of termination or nonrenewal of rental agreements.

Brief Description: Concerning the delivery, execution, acceptance, and provisions of individual storage space rental agreements and modifying the use of individual storage spaces after notice of termination or nonrenewal of rental agreements.

Sponsors: Senators Lovick, Schoesler, Dozier, Fortunato, Wilson, C. and Wilson, J..

Brief History:
Committee Activity: Business, Trade & Economic Development: 1/22/26.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes electronic delivery and acceptance of storage space rental contracts, and provides for the automatic acceptance of the contracts.
- Creates a uniform process for the termination or nonrenewal of storage space rental contracts and the removal of personal property from storage facilities.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS, TRADE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Staff: William Bridges (786-7312)

Background: Self-Service Storage Facilities. Self-service storage facilities in Washington, in which a building or property owner rents space to an occupant for the storage of goods, are governed by the Washington Self-Service Storage Facility Act. Among other things, the act requires written rental agreements; allows owners to deny occupants access to their

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rented units after six days of non-payment, if specified in the contract; authorizes owners to enforce unpaid rent by a lien; and allows owners to sell the occupant's storage property a minimum of 42 days after proper notice in order to satisfy the lien. There are no statutory remedies for non-monetary defaults, such as the violation of facility rules.

Summary of Bill: Authorizing Electronic Contracts and Providing for the Automatic Acceptance of Contracts. Rental agreements for individual storage space in self-service storage facilities may be delivered and signed electronically, as well as by hand delivery, first-class mail, or email. If an occupant continues to use a storage space for 30 days after receiving a rental agreement, that agreement becomes legally enforceable, even without a physical or electronic signature.

Creating a Uniform Process for the Termination or Nonrenewal of Self-Service Storage Contracts. A rental agreement may contain a provision notifying the occupant of the owner's right to dispose of personal property remaining at the self-service storage facility more than five days after the termination or non-renewal of the agreement.

A notice of termination of nonrenewal given to an occupant must be hand delivered, emailed, or sent by any method of mailing that is offered by the United States postal service that provides evidence of mailing. The notice must provide at least 15 days for an occupant to remove their personal property from the self-service storage facility. Prior to the occupant's removal of belongings, owners may place reasonable restrictions on the occupant's use of the self-storage facility, including denying access to the facility except for the occupant to remove personal property during the owner's office hours. The owner may dispose of any personal property remaining at the self-service storage facility after the date provided in the written notice.

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 modernizes storage space rental agreements by allowing electronic delivery and acceptance of leases. The bill will reduce disputes, clarifying that any tenant who uses storage space for at least 30 days automatically accepts the lease. Lastly, it standardizes lease termination by requiring owners to give 15 days' notice to tenants. This bill follows similar laws in several other states, such as Georgia, Idaho, Kansas and Utah, and benefits both storage space owners and renters.

This bill provides clear procedures for addressing serious safety situations at storage facilities. Currently, Washington law provides a clear process when customers don't pay

rent, but it's silent on what happens when we need to terminate a lease for other reasons, like threats to staff safety. An operator had a verbally abusive customer, creating an unsafe work environment. The operator had no choice but to terminate the customer's lease. Without clear statutory guidance, every operator handles these situations differently. The attorney the operator consulted recommended the filing of an unlawful detainer lawsuit, which protected the customer's rights but cost the operator time and money. This bill would have given the operator a clear path forward. The bill's termination provision allows operators to provide written notice with a reasonable timeline for the customer to remove their belongings, then restrict access to removal-only during business hours. This protects both the customer's property rights and the safety of everyone else at the facility. This law creates consistency and fairness for all sides.

This bill clarifies and modernizes Washington's self-storage law while maintaining strong consumer protections. The bill allows electronic signatures. It also clarifies that when a rental agreement is properly delivered via mail or email and a customer continues using the unit for 30 days, that use confirms acceptance of the agreement. The bill establishes clear, fair procedures at lease termination or non-renewal. Customers receive at least 15 days' written notice to remove their items, with reasonable access provided for removal, and clear notice about when abandoned property may be disposed of if it remains in the unit after the termination.

National efforts started in 2024 to modernize self-storage laws. At least a dozen states have adopted these provisions. These include western states such as California, Idaho, and Utah and states in other parts of the country such as Illinois, Delaware, and Maine.

Two years ago, a person moved her mom from out of state into a senior housing community here in Washington. It was stressful, but she was able to reserve a storage unit with a 20-minute phone call and a credit card. But she couldn't fully secure or sign the lease until she arrived in person. Their drive took over 12 hours. When they arrived, the office was closed, and they had to to leave their belongings sitting overnight in a moving truck in the parking lot. They were worried about potential theft and safety, simply because the transaction couldn't be completed online.

This bill creates clear non-monetary default procedures to protect customers, workers, and operators. Providing a safe and secure space for people to store items important to them without fear or risk to themselves or their items is important to everyone. An operator had an incident at their facility where a paying customer was threatening other clients. A 30-day notice not to renew the lease was served in hopes the customer would honor it and move out. The operator had to rescind the notice before the 30 days to avoid an expensive legal eviction as the customer said he was not moving because he pays his rent. After restricting appointment hours so the customer could be monitored while onsite, and with multiple incidents of the customer verbally assaulting managers, the operator convinced the customer to move out by paying the customer the cost of 3-months' rent. This bill would have provided guidance on how to cancel the contract to protect current customers, steps to

protect the customer who was being canceled, and steps to provide access for the canceled customer to remove their items in a timely but reasonable manner.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator John Lovick, Prime Sponsor; Patrick Gilroy, Washington Self Storage Association; Lance Baker, Washington Self Storage Association; Joe Doherty, Self Storage Association; Kristi Tripple, Rowley Properties, Inc.; Kevin Schaps, Storage Court.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.