SENATE BILL REPORT
SB 6001

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Housing, January 28, 2026

Title: An act relating to scissor stair regulations in the state building code.

Brief Description: Concerning scissor stair regulations in the state building code.

Sponsors: Senators Bateman, Liias and Shewmake.

Brief History:
Committee Activity: Housing: 1/21/26, 1/28/26 [DPS].

Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Requires the State Building Code Council to convene a technical advisory group for the purpose of recommending amendments to the State Building Code that would allow scissor stairs in certain residencies.
- Directs the advisory group to provide its recommendations in time for the Council to adopt or amend rules and codes as necessary for implementation in the 2027 code update.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6001 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Bateman, Chair; Alvarado, Vice Chair; Goehner, Ranking Member; Gildon, Orwall, Salomon and Trudeau.

Staff: Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

Background: State Building Code, Council. The State Building Code (SBC) provides a set of statewide standards and requirements related to building construction. The SBC is

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comprised of various international model codes, including building, residential, fire, and plumbing codes (model codes) adopted by reference by the Legislature. The model codes are promulgated by the International Code Council.

The State Building Code Council (SBCC) is responsible for adopting, amending, and maintaining the SBC. The SBCC must regularly review updated versions of the model codes and adopt a process for reviewing proposed statewide and local amendments.

The model codes are updated every three years. The SBCC must adopt amendments to the SBC on a three-year cycle that follows the model code adoption cycle. Substantive amendments to the SBC may only be made once during the update cycle.

Cities and counties may amend the SBC as applied within their jurisdiction, except that amendments may not be below minimum performance standards, and no amendment affecting single or multifamily residential buildings may be effective until approved by the SBCC.

The SBCC can convene technical advisory groups (TAGs) to review petitions for amendments. TAGs may include one councilmember, but otherwise must consist of subject matter experts designated by the SBCC.

A person can qualify as a subject matter expert through education, training, or experience that leads to the person being recognized as an expert on a subject, topic, or system. A person who wishes to be appointed to a TAG may submit an application to the SBCC during an application period. The SBCC must approve or deny an application within 30 days of the close of the application period.

In order for a petition referred to a TAG to be taken up for consideration by the SBCC, it must receive the approval of a majority of the TAG.

A fire resistance rating is the amount of time that a building component can withstand a fire before losing structural integrity during a standardized fire resistance test.

Summary of Bill (First Substitute): Scissor stairs are interlocking stairways with separate exits that are separately enclosed and divided by fire-resistance rated assemblies.

The SBCC must convene a TAG for the purpose of recommending amendments to the SBC that would allow scissor stairs in occupancies of more than two dwelling units in which the occupants are primarily permanent. The TAG must consider public health, safety, welfare, and construction cost when making recommendations.

The recommendations must be made to the SBCC in time for the SBCC to adopt or amend rules and codes as necessary for implementation in the 2027 code update to the SBC.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY HOUSING COMMITTEE (First Substitute):

- Requires that the recommendations be submitted to the SBCC in time for the SBCC to adopt or amend rules and codes as necessary for implementation in the 2027 update to the SBC, as opposed to the update occurring after January 1, 2027.
- Specifies that scissor stairs are separately enclosed and divided by fire-resistance rated assemblies, as opposed to fire-resistance rated walls.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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 on Original Bill: *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: Scissor stairs improve safety while utilizing a design that would help reduce building costs. The bill would reduce a barrier to creating stacked flats and similar types of housing. The bill would allow for smaller multiplexes. Current restrictions make for larger footprints and fewer windows, impacting quality of life. The differences in efficiency created by scissor stairs can be the difference between a project being built and not. Legalizing scissor stairs will not solve the housing crisis itself, but would be an incremental step in creating more economical housing. Scissor stairs are an elegant way of having two sets of egress without wide floor plates, and would benefit cities across the state. Reducing the dedicated floor space to stairwells allows for larger floor plans and more windows.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Jessica Bateman, Prime Sponsor; Iain MacKenzie, TVA Architects; MATT HUTCHINS, CAST architecture; Markus Johnson; Bryce Yadon, Futurewise; Dan Bertolet, Sightline Institute.

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