
SENATE BILL 5678

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Senators Dozier, Braun, and J. Wilson

Read first time 02/06/25. 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 a
3 moratorium on new residential landlord-tenant regulations; adding a
4 new section to chapter 35.21 RCW; adding a new section to chapter
5 35A.21 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 36.01 RCW; creating new
6 sections; and providing an expiration date.

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

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

20 (2) Therefore, the legislature intends to establish a task force
21 dedicated to a comprehensive study of the residential landlord-tenant

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

38 (G) One representative of a statewide tenant legal aid
39 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;

9 (K) One representative from the superior court judges'
10 association; and

11 (L) The director of the department of commerce or the director's
12 designee.

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

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

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

21 (b) Security deposits and fees;

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

24 (d) Required notices;

25 (e) Just cause eviction;

26 (f) Lease compliance;

27 (g) A rental registry;

28 (h) Local control;

29 (i) Access to rental assistance;

30 (j) Liability for violations of the residential landlord-tenant
31 act;

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

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

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

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

1 (5) Legislative members of the task force are reimbursed for
2 travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative
3 members are not entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses if they
4 are elected officials or are participating on behalf of an employer,
5 governmental entity, or other organization. Any reimbursement for
6 other nonlegislative members is subject to chapter 43.03 RCW.

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

10 (7) By July 1, 2027, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the
11 task force shall report its findings and recommendations to the
12 appropriate committees of the legislature.

13 (8) This section expires July 1, 2029.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 35.21
15 RCW to read as follows:

16 For a period of 36 months following the effective date of this
17 section, a city or town may not enact or create a new ordinance,
18 development regulation, zoning regulation, official control, policy,
19 or administrative practice that regulates the residential landlord-
20 tenant relationship.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 35A.21
22 RCW to read as follows:

23 For a period of 36 months following the effective date of this
24 section, a code city may not enact or create a new ordinance,
25 development regulation, zoning regulation, official control, policy,
26 or administrative practice that regulates the residential landlord-
27 tenant relationship.

28 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 36.01
29 RCW to read as follows:

30 For a period of 36 months following the effective date of this
31 section, a county may not enact or create a new ordinance,
32 development regulation, zoning regulation, official control, policy,
33 or administrative practice which regulates the residential landlord-
34 tenant relationship.

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