

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1277

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**As Passed House:**

March 13, 2001

**Title:** An act relating to residential landlord-tenant relationships.

**Brief Description:** Regarding residential landlord-tenant relationships.

**Sponsors:** By Representatives Bush, Veloria, Van Luven, Kenney, Kirby, Mulliken and Dunshee.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Local Government & Housing: 2/1/01, 2/26/01 [DP].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed House: 3/13/01, 94-0.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Amends the State's Residential Landlord-Tenant Act to allow a District or Superior Court to approve the service of legal documents, by certified mail, to the address posted on the property owner's tax statement or address provided to the tenant for payment of rent.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT & HOUSING

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Dunshee, Democratic Co-Chair; Mulliken, Republican Co-Chair; Edwards, Democratic Vice Chair; Mielke, Republican Vice Chair; Berkey, Crouse, Dunn, Edmonds, Hatfield, Jarrett and Kirby.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative DeBolt.

**Staff:** Kenny Pittman (786-7392).

**Background:**

The State's Residential Landlord-Tenant Act (Act) governs the relationship between the renter of residential property (tenant) and the property owner or property owner's agent

(landlord). The Act outlines the specific duties of the landlord and tenant.

Under the State's Residential Landlord-Tenant Act, a landlord is required to designate to the tenant the name and address of the person who is the landlord by a statement on the rental agreement or by a notice conspicuously posted on the premises. The tenant must be notified immediately of any changes by certified mail or by an updated posting. If the person listed in the statement or posted notice does not reside in the state, the statement or posted notice must list the name and address of a person that resides within the county where the property is located and is authorized to act as agent for purposes of notices and process. If no person is listed then the person who collects rental payments is considered the property owner's agent.

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**Summary of Bill:**

The State's Residential Landlord-Tenant Act is amended to allow the service of legal documents to the landlord by certified mail to the address posted on the property owner's tax statement or address provided to the tenant for payment of rent. This option must be approved by a superior or district court and used when the tenant is unable to determine the physical address of the landlord from the required statement or posting.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not Requested.

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

**Testimony For:** (In support) The vast majority of landlords comply with the requirement that they provide an address so that tenants can send them notices. However, there are some landlords that evade this requirement. The bill would provide an alternative, court-approved method to serve those landlords with legal notices when they do not list a physical address. Having the notice delivered by certified mail will protect both the tenant and the landlord in legal matters. It should be remembered that is method to serve notice to the landlord will only be used when existing notification methods cannot be used.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** (In support) Rep. Bush, prime sponsor; Ken Spenser, Director, Manufactured Housing Community; and Doug Nyhart, Apartment Association of Seattle and King County.