

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1277

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**As Passed House:**

February 6, 2002

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

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

**Sponsors:** By House Committee on Local Government & Housing (originally sponsored by Representatives Bush, Veloria, Van Luven, Kenney, Kirby, Mulliken and Dunshee).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Local Government & Housing: 1/21/02, 1/30/02 [DPS].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed House: 2/6/02, 97-0.

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Allows a court to approve the service of legal documents when the location of the landlord cannot be ascertained by the address posted on the property owner's tax statement, or by the address provided to the tenant for payment of rent.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT & HOUSING

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Dunshee, Chair; Edwards, Vice Chair; Mulliken, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Crouse, DeBolt, Dunn, Hatfield, Kirby, Mielke and Sullivan.

**Staff:** Amy Wood (786-7127).

**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 either 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 Substitute 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 only 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:** The majority of landlords comply with the requirement that they provide an address so that tenants can serve them notice. However, in the event that a landlord does not comply with this requirement, this bill provides an alternative remedy for tenants. This method of service is used only when existing notification methods cannot be used and requires prior court approval.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Representative Bush, prime sponsor; Judy Hart, citizen; and Patty Van Den Brock, Apartment Association of Seattle-King County.