
HOUSE BILL 2275

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2024 Regular Session

By Representatives Reeves and Morgan

Read first time 01/10/24. Referred to Committee on Housing.

1 AN ACT Relating to senior independent living facilities; adding a
2 new section to chapter 19.27 RCW; adding a new chapter to Title 70
3 RCW; and providing an expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 19.27
6 RCW to read as follows:

7 (1) The legislature finds that the unique needs of independent
8 senior citizens warrant residential building requirements for senior
9 independent living facilities that are different than those that
10 apply to traditional, nonage-restricted multifamily residential
11 developments.

12 (2) The state building code council shall convene a technical
13 advisory group for the purpose of recommending amendments to the
14 rules or codes applicable to senior independent living facilities to
15 enhance building accessibility and safety for independent senior
16 citizens and persons with disabilities. The technical advisory group
17 shall strive to align the rules or codes applicable to senior
18 independent living facilities with the rules or codes applicable to
19 assisted living facilities, nursing homes, long-term care facilities,
20 and other similar living arrangements. When developing the
21 recommendations, the technical advisory group must consult with

1 experts in public health, fire and life safety, and building
2 accessibility.

3 (3) The technical advisory group shall provide its
4 recommendations to the state building code council in time for the
5 council to adopt or amend rules or codes as necessary for
6 implementation in the 2024 code adoption cycle. The state building
7 code council shall take action to adopt additions and amendments to
8 rules or codes as necessary by July 1, 2026.

9 (4) For the purposes of this section, "senior independent living
10 facility" means any residential facility that is advertised,
11 maintained, designed, or constructed for the express or implied
12 purpose of providing housing for persons 55 years of age or older who
13 are independent and do not require assistance with activities of
14 daily living. Senior independent living facilities are typically
15 designed to enable seniors to live on their own, but with the
16 security and convenience of community living, including recreational,
17 educational, and social activities. "Senior independent living
18 facilities" do not include facilities that provide medical care or
19 assistance with activities of daily living, such as assisted living
20 facilities, nursing homes, long-term care facilities, or other
21 similar living arrangements.

22 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply
23 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires
24 otherwise.

25 (1) "Department" means the department of commerce.

26 (2) "Resident" means any person who lives in a senior independent
27 living facility.

28 (3) "Senior independent living facility" means any residential
29 facility that is advertised, maintained, designed, or constructed for
30 the express or implied purpose of providing housing for persons 55
31 years of age or older who are independent and do not require
32 assistance with activities of daily living. Senior independent living
33 facilities are typically designed to enable seniors to live on their
34 own, but with the security and convenience of community living,
35 including recreational, educational, and social activities. "Senior
36 independent living facilities" do not include facilities that provide
37 medical care or assistance with activities of daily living, such as
38 assisted living facilities, nursing homes, long-term care facilities,
39 or other similar living arrangements.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) In addition to any other rights
2 provided by law, residents in senior independent living facilities
3 have the rights provided in this section. The rights provided in this
4 section are minimum rights guaranteed to all residents of senior
5 independent living facilities and are not intended to diminish any
6 other rights provided in local, state, or federal laws.

7 (2) A resident in a senior independent living facility has the
8 right to:

9 (a) Be free of interference, coercion, discrimination, and
10 reprisal from the facility in exercising the resident's rights;

11 (b) Be treated respectfully by management, employees, and staff
12 of the facility;

13 (c) Install safety and security devices, including cameras, at
14 the entrance to the resident's individual living unit or within the
15 unit;

16 (d) Organize, attend, and hold meetings open to any and all
17 residents of the facility at reasonable hours and times;

18 (e) Communicate with and receive a timely response from the
19 manager of the senior independent living facility or the manager's
20 designee at any time of day, including after hours and on weekends,
21 in case of emergencies; and

22 (f) Provide anonymous suggestions and feedback to the management,
23 employees, and staff of the senior independent living facility
24 through methods such as suggestion boxes in common areas.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) The department shall study and report
26 on the possibility of creating an office of senior housing within the
27 department as described in this section.

28 (2) The purpose of the office of senior housing will be to lead
29 and coordinate efforts related to providing oversight for senior
30 independent living facilities and help ensure that senior independent
31 living facilities comply with any relevant local, state, and federal
32 laws and regulations related to building accessibility and safety,
33 reasonable accommodations, landlord-tenant duties, lease enforcement,
34 and any other relevant resident rights including, but not limited to,
35 the following:

36 (a) The residential landlord-tenant act in chapter 59.18 RCW;

37 (b) The law against discrimination in chapter 49.60 RCW;

38 (c) The state building code in chapter 19.27 RCW;

1 (d) The senior independent living facility resident rights
2 provided in section 3 of this act;

3 (e) The federal fair housing act (42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.);

4 (f) The federal Americans with disabilities act (42 U.S.C. 12101
5 et seq.); and

6 (g) Any other relevant state and federal laws and regulations.

7 (3) The office of senior housing should function as a single
8 point of contact for residents who have complaints about a senior
9 independent living facility or need assistance with enforcing their
10 rights.

11 (4) The office of senior housing should, at minimum, have the
12 duty and power to:

13 (a) Provide education to residents and potential residents about
14 their rights and responsibilities;

15 (b) Collect resident complaints and other relevant data, and
16 report this information to appropriate local, state, and federal
17 agencies on a regular basis; and

18 (c) Directly enforce or help coordinate enforcement of the
19 relevant local, state, and federal laws and regulations described in
20 subsection (2) of this section with the appropriate local, state, and
21 federal agencies.

22 (5) In studying the possibility of creating an office of senior
23 housing, the department shall consult with appropriate stakeholders
24 and any local, state, or federal agencies with responsibilities
25 related to senior housing and aging issues including, but not limited
26 to, the department of social and health services, the department of
27 health, the office of the state long-term care ombuds, the Washington
28 state human rights commission, the consumer protection division of
29 the attorney general's office, the state council on aging, local area
30 agencies on aging, the United States department of housing and urban
31 development, and the United States department of justice.

32 (6) By July 1, 2025, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the
33 department shall submit a report to the appropriate committees of the
34 legislature that includes information and recommendations about
35 options, benefits, risks, and costs associated with establishing an
36 office of senior housing within the department.

37 (7) This section expires July 1, 2026.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** Sections 2 through 4 of this act
2 constitute a new chapter in Title 70 RCW.

--- **END** ---