

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5678

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As of February 11, 2025

**Title:** An act relating to preparing for revisions to the residential landlord-tenant act by creating a task force and establishing a moratorium on new residential landlord-tenant regulations.

**Brief Description:** Preparing for revisions to the residential landlord-tenant act by creating a task force and establishing a moratorium on new residential landlord-tenant regulations.

**Sponsors:** Senators Dozier, Braun and Wilson, J..

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Housing: 2/14/25.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Creates a task force to study and make recommendations regarding potential updates to the Residential Landlord-Tenant Act and report its findings and recommendations to Legislature by July 1, 2027.
- Prohibits counties, cities, code cities, and towns from enacting or creating new ordinances, development regulations, zoning regulations, official controls, policies or administrative practices that regulates the residential landlord-tenant relationship for 36-months.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

**Staff:** Bill Fosbre (786-7531)

**Background:** The Residential Landlord-Tenant Act (RLTA) governs the legal duties, rights, and remedies related to any rental agreement between a landlord and a tenant for a residential dwelling unit.

No county, city or town of any class may enact, maintain, or enforce ordinances or other

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provisions which regulate the amount of rent to be charged for single-family or multiple-unit residential rental structures or sites other than properties in public ownership, under public management, or properties providing low-income rental housing under joint public-private agreements for the financing or provision of such low-income rental housing.

Local governments are not preempted from requiring relocation assistance to tenants displaced by a landlord's failure to remedy building code or health code violations.

Tenants who terminate a rental agreement because the tenant or a household member was a victim of a crime of domestic violence, sexual assault, unlawful harassment, or stalking, and has either protection order or has notified a qualified third party acting in their official capacity is not limited to the remedies under RLTA.

**Summary of Bill:** A task force is created to study and review the RLTA and report its findings and recommendations to Legislature by July 1, 2027. The Department of Commerce (Commerce) must provide staff support for the task force. The task force must choose its chair or cochairs from among its membership. The legislative members of the task force must convene the initial meeting.

The members of the task force shall be made up of:

- one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate; and
- one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the House of Representatives appointed by Speaker of the House of Representatives.
- one representative of the for-profit residential property management and operations industry specializing in management of residential properties with 20 or more rental units;
- two representatives of the residential property management and operations industry specializing in management of residential properties with between one and four rental units, with one representative from east of the crest of the Cascade Mountains and one representative from west of the crest of the Cascade Mountains;
- one representative of the nonprofit residential property management and operations industry;
- one representative of the real estate sales profession;
- one representative of the for-profit housing development industry;
- one representative of the nonprofit housing development industry;
- one representative of a statewide Tenant Legal Aid Association;
- one representative from a tenant-based organization representing historically underserved populations;
- one representative of public housing authorities;
- two representatives of the Association of Washington Cities, with one representative from a city that is located east of the crest of the Cascade Mountains and one representative from a city that is located west of the crest of the Cascade Mountains;
- one representative from the Superior Court Judges' Association; and

- the director of the Commerce or the director's designee.

The task shall make recommendations regarding potential updates to following issue areas:

- rent increase limits and rent stabilization policies;
- security deposits and fees;
- court processes related to the RLTA, including the eviction process;
- required notices;
- just cause eviction;
- lease compliance;
- a rental registry;
- local control;
- access to rental assistance;
- liability for violations of the RLTA;
- tenant screening and access to rental housing; and
- any other issues that the task force deems relevant.

Counties, cities, code cities, and towns may not enact or create new ordinances, development regulations, zoning regulations, official controls, policies or administrative practices that regulates the residential landlord-tenant relationship for 36-months following the effective date.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 6, 2025.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** Yes.

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