

## Dear members of the LLA,

The following information is important! It may severely impact your business and investments, and it is advisable that all members take the time to consider it carefully.

The upcoming City Council elections should be of particular concern to Spokane's housing providers. There has been mounting pressure placed on City Council Members to impose measures which go beyond Washington State landlord/tenant law in restricting landlord business and property rights. These measures may profoundly impact a landlord's ability to successfully conduct business within the City of Spokane. There follows a brief overview of each measure. Some or all of them are already in place with certain other cities in Washington State and elsewhere. Since there is a very real possibility they will be brought to Spokane, we would advise all landlords, large or small, to become acquainted with the measures and especially with the views held by potential City Council Members.

A brief survey was conducted of all City Council candidates for their views regarding these measures. Despite repeated invitations to respond, some candidates did not reply. All candidate responses so far received are linked further down, but the issue-specific, yes or no, questions may be explained briefly as directly follows:

### **Q 6. Do you approve of all housing-voucher holders having been made a protected class?**

This measure compels landlords, on pain of a discrimination charge, into taking extra financial risks with tenants who likely have no assets or attachable income. Requiring a cosigner for voucher-holders may also be deemed discriminatory. In the event there are losses due to unpaid rent, eviction, and/or damage, landlords will have no way to recover those losses. The recently promoted "Landlord Mitigation Program" comes with obstacles that render it impractical. Additionally, some voucher payment programs require that landlords sign lease over-ride addenda.

### **Q 7. Would you support a rental registration requirement?**

This measure might help with identifying and notifying the owners of "problem" properties to make sure they are made aware of any issues. It may also help to stem blights on neighborhoods. However, this measure could be misused as a first step toward rental licensing and/or inspections.

### **Q 8. Would you support a rental inspection requirement?**

This measure would entail the creation of additional City bureaucracy. The fee costs would inevitably be passed onto all tenants, in the form of higher rents, for the sake of a genuine, but very small percentage of substandard properties. A more efficient and cost-effective way of addressing substandard properties should be found.

### **Q 9. Would you support a just cause (no cause) eviction/termination requirement?**

This measure severely restricts a landlord's ability to terminate or evict month-to-month tenants. Landlords, neighbors and neighborhoods would have to endure that reality. Experience has shown that inability to remove irresponsible tenants may cause responsible tenants to move out. Left with little or no ability to serve 20 day notices, many, if not most, landlords will cease to offer month-to-month agreements. Many landlords and

tenants currently enjoy the flexibility of not being locked into a lease. If just cause (no cause) is imposed in Spokane, those landlords and tenants would lose that option. In Portland, Oregon, termination or eviction without just cause now forces a landlord to pay relocation costs of between \$2,900 for a studio, \$3,300 for a one bedroom, \$4,200 for a two bedroom, and \$4,500 for a three bedroom unit.

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/eudaly/article/627469>

[https://www.pacermonitor.com/public/case/20569139/Owen\\_et\\_al\\_v\\_City\\_of\\_Portland](https://www.pacermonitor.com/public/case/20569139/Owen_et_al_v_City_of_Portland)

**Q 10. Would you support a first come-first serve requirement?**

This measure would force a landlord to accept the first qualified applicant instead of the best qualified applicant.

**Q 11. Would you support a compulsory installment plan for security deposits?**

This measure would force landlords to entrust their property to tenants while waiting for months on end (six months in Seattle) without a full security deposit in place.

**Q 12. Would you support any other move-in expense controls?**

For many smaller landlords in particular, profits are already marginal. Additional financial burden and risk would further decrease their incentive to stay in the business.

**Q 13. Would you support rent control (under any name or disguise)?**

This is prohibited in Washington State and in some other jurisdictions, but some of those jurisdictions have nonetheless imposed it by using creative terminology. Furthermore, Spokane rental rates are still very low in comparison with other cities.

**The completed candidate surveys are linked as follows:**

Kathryn Alexander survey link:

<https://landlordassoc.org/wp-content/uploads/Kathryn-Alexander-survey.pdf>

Tim Benn survey link:

<https://landlordassoc.org/wp-content/uploads/Tim-Benn-survey.pdf>

Kate Burke survey link:

<https://landlordassoc.org/wp-content/uploads/Kate-Burke-survey.pdf>

Tony Kiepe survey link:

<https://landlordassoc.org/wp-content/uploads/Tony-Kiepe-Survey2.pdf>