

# **Your Voice is Needed Now More Than Ever!**

**Steve Corker, LLA President**

**The Legislature is at it again, seven Bills would make it harder for landlords to stay in business and continue to provide affordable housing. Your voice must be heard! Call, write, e-mail or testify (there is a location in Spokane to do just that)!**

**The Democrats continue to say, that the first thing to do for the homeless is to put a roof over their heads! For the working poor, for the family hit with a job loss or a major medical expense, that may make sense. The voucher system was designed to specifically help these people. But for the mentally ill and for those addicted to drugs or alcohol, unless you have case manager support, additional deposits, or have the social agencies co-sign the lease, "Housing First" is doomed to failure!**

**Your leadership spent a full 18-hour day in Olympia talking with legislators. The Republicans were sympathetic and supportive of our concerns. But with the Democrats, our concerns fell on deaf ears. Our delegation was included LLA President Steve Corker, Board Members Ann Wick, and Daniel Klemme, members Phil Sandifur, George Dietrich and Executive Director Roger Trainor.**

**One question we asked of all was, "What role do you expect the private sector to play in resolving the housing crisis? Private landlords supply 97% of this country's rental housing, and your legislative actions are discouraging current and future participation. If we can't control the environment of our properties, can't protect other tenants and neighbors, and can't protect our investment from destructive behavior why would you expect us to continue to take these risks?" There were no answers given to us!**

**These are the Bills we oppose!**

**HB 2453/SB 6379 "Statewide Just Cause" Landlords may not refuse to renew leases. If landlords don't proffer a new lease between 90 and 30 days before the end of the old lease, it becomes month-to-month. Month-to-month agreements become one-sided (the tenant has sole discretion to leave with 20 day's notice – or to stay indefinitely). It may become difficult or impossible to remove problem tenants. A landlord may not deny new coresident (who may be screened) if requested by an existing tenant (this does not apply to subsidized housing). Penalty for Just Cause violation - 4.5 month's rent plus atty fees and costs. Penalty for knowingly including a prohibited provision in a lease – 1 month's rent or treble actual damages. Penalty for not complying with a written request for return of tenant possessions – actual damages. If withholding was intentional - \$500 per day up to \$5000 plus atty fees and costs. A trustee sale gives occupants 20 days to move and tenants 60 days.**

**HB 2520 "Extreme Changes Regarding Security Deposits" Requires a landlord to provide at the commencement of a tenancy the age of fixtures and appliances, the date of installment and their life expectancy. Limits a landlord's window for bringing small-claims action to 1 year. Requires a landlord to conduct move-out walkthroughs between 30 and 14**

days prior to the end of a tenancy (the unit would likely still be furnished and the damage is often done during the move-out process). Grants tenant the right to be present at the move-out inspection and requires tenant signature on move-out condition report for it to be legally valid (tenant may simply choose not to sign).

**HB 2878/SB 6490 “Ban-the-Box”** Prohibits a landlord from requiring disclosure of criminal convictions. This prohibition applies to private landlords only - not to project-based landlords such as the Spokane Housing Authority. This creates a double standard for the safety of tenants with private landlords vs. those of public landlords.

**HB 2779 “Rent Control”** Any year-on-year increase over 3% requires 180 days notice and would allow a tenant to terminate at will and prorated. No increase may exceed 10% or 5% above CPI (whichever is the lesser).

Places price and supply restrictions on housing supply in Washington State

**HB 2724/SB 6378 “Additional Restrictions and follow-up to SB 5600”** Requires a landlord to alter rent-due-date if requested. Removes a landlord's 3-strikes pay-or-vacate notice exemption from judicial discretion. For up to 5 days after a judgment for restitution, a landlord must accept any pledge of payment from any emergency rental assistance source. Requires Court Order showing stay of restitution for claims against the Landlord Mitigation Program. Takes immediate effect upon passage.

**HB 2535 “No Late Fees Owed for the First Five Days after Rent-Due-Date”**

**HB 1694 “Installment Plans for Deposits, Fees and Last Month's Rent”** For fixed-term leases of 3 months or more, landlords must allow tenants to pay costs in 3 equal monthly installments (1 at move-in and 2 subsequent payments). Month-to-month tenants may pay in 2 consecutive installments. The plan must be in writing and signed by the landlord and tenant.

**Here is one Bill we do support!**

**HB 2069 “Concerning Utility Charges”** Prevents landlords from being penalized by municipalities for tenant owed utility charges.

**Our Overall Impression.**

**We are very disappointed with the direction the state is going in regards to landlord-tenant issues under Democratic leadership. Now is not the time for quiet restraint. Let your voice be heard! Contact your legislator! Do it now!**