

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 5568

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning the disclosure of certain information when screening tenants.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Financial Institutions, Housing & Insurance (originally sponsored by Senators Hobbs, Kohl-Welles, Billig, Frockt, Chase, Harper, Hasegawa, Keiser, Shin, Kline and Nelson).

Senate Committee on Financial Institutions, Housing & Insurance
House Committee on Judiciary

Background: The Residential Landlord-Tenant Act (RLTA) regulates residential tenancies and the relationship between landlords and tenants of residential dwelling units. The RLTA establishes rights and duties of both tenants and landlords, procedures for the parties to enforce their rights, and remedies for violations of the RLTA.

Landlord duties include such things as the duty to maintain the premises in reasonably good repair and remedy defective conditions within specified timelines. Tenant duties include the duty to pay rent, not damage the dwelling or allow a nuisance, and not engage in drug activity or criminal activity on the premises. The RLTA covers a wide variety of other issues governing the landlord-tenant relationship, including: prohibited provisions in rental agreements and prohibited practices by landlords; the landlord's right of access to the dwelling unit; procedures and remedies available to a landlord when a tenant has abandoned the tenancy or is subject to eviction for violations of the RLTA; and requirements with respect to the collection and retention of security deposits, nonrefundable fees, and fees or deposits to hold a dwelling unit or secure a tenancy.

Under the RLTA, a landlord may not terminate a tenancy, fail to renew a tenancy, or refuse to enter into a rental agreement based on the tenant's, applicant's, or household member's status as a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or based on the tenant terminating a tenancy based on these crimes as provided for in RCW 59.18.575.

With a tenant or prospective tenant's permission, a tenant screening provider may provide a landlord with information regarding a tenant's background which may include credit and criminal history. If a landlord denies tenancy, or fails to renew a tenancy, based on information in the tenant or prospective tenant's consumer report, the landlord must let the person know the decision was made based upon information in that report as well as information as to how the person may access the report, for free.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary: A tenant screening service provider may not disclose a tenant's, applicant's, or household member's status as a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking; or knowingly disclose as to whether that person previously terminated a tenancy as a victim of these crimes. Tenants may voluntarily disclose their victim status.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	46	3
House	94	0

Effective: January 1, 2014.