



Rental Safety Resolution

Proposed Motions: Approve the Rental Safety Resolution

Sponsor: Kaylee Galloway, AS VP for Governmental Affairs

Persons of Contact: Kaylee Galloway, Robby Eckroth, Carly Roberts, and Joseph Levy

Date: February 5, 2014

Background & Context

In June 2010, a Resolution Regarding a Rental Licensing Ordinance was passed. When rental safety was drafted as a proposal through the Legislative Affairs Council in Fall of 2013, it was decided to update the resolution. The rental safety proposal for the AS Local Agenda and Rental Safety Resolution were brought as an information item to the AS Board on December 6, 2013. The AS Local Agenda proposal was passed on December 11, 2013, but the resolution needed additional revision. Since then, the resolution has received feedback from the Legislative Affairs Council as well as from the AS Rental Safety Work Group.

I believe it is now ready to be considered for AS Board approval.

Rationale:

It is in the best interest of the AS to update the Rental Safety resolution to reflect the issues that students are facing today.



Associated Students of Western Washington University
Board of Directors

A Resolution Regarding Rental Safety
February 2014

WHEREAS, the majority of Western Washington University students rent either apartments or homes in the City of Bellingham; and,

WHEREAS, tenants entering into a lease with a landlord should have a reasonable expectation of safety, housing code compliance, and landlord-tenant communication; and,

WHEREAS, the lack of accountability for rental property owners in the City of Bellingham has allowed for landlords to ~~inconsistently adhere to and~~ operate outside of the Residential Landlord-Tenant Act; and,

WHEREAS, Western Washington University students are being harmed by living in substandard rental housing ~~that are~~ in violation of housing codes and health and safety standards as established in Chapter 59.18 RCW Residential Landlord-Tenant Act; and,

WHEREAS, health and safety laws are only effective if enforced. The ~~reporting-complaint~~ based system is ~~currently not inadequately~~ enforced ~~and places~~ placing an undue burden on tenants to take action in order to live in safe housing; and,

WHEREAS, enforcement of housing standards will remove delinquent landlords from the market so that compliant landlords will have more fair competition; and,

WHEREAS, existing codes and laws are not written in a way that is accessible to lay people; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, building and fire codes must be made more accessible in order for tenants to identify violations and seek appropriate remedies; and,

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, all ~~city-relevant~~ codes and ~~state~~ laws should be enforced or else reformed to increase landlord and tenant accountability; and,

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, all relevant codes and laws should be provided to tenants before signing their contract; and,

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, the City of Bellingham should implement a landlord registration process to monitor who is renting and enforce rental inspections for code violators in order to increase landlord accountability; and,

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the Associated Students is dedicated to ensuring that safe housing is available to all tenants and are eager to work with the City of Bellingham to find tangible solutions towards positive change.

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