

ABOUT RHAWA

WHO WE ARE

RHAWA has existed in some form or another since 1935, starting out as a Seattle based association that grew into a regional resource throughout the Puget Sound area. In an effort to serve all those in the rental housing industry regardless of geographic location in Washington, RHAWA expanded to become a statewide association in 2012. Currently made up of more than 5,400 members, we are the premier rental housing association in Washington State. Over the past 80+ years RHAWA has evolved into one of the most valuable resources for independent rental owners and managers.

MISSION + VALUES

RHAWA supports + champions the rental housing industry through advocacy, a high standard of ethics, education, research, products, and services.

VALUES



Excellence

We strive to be the best in everything we do.



Innovation

We are creative in delivering value to our members in everything from services to products to processes.



Integrity

We conduct ourselves honestly and ethically.



Learning

We promote continuous skill and knowledge development.



Outside-In Focus

We believe that growth comes from looking at opportunity through the eyes of our members.



Respect

We treat others with the highest degree of dignity, equality and trust.



Teamwork

We work collaboratively to achieve common goals.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Members of the Rental Housing Association of Washington, agree to conduct business in accordance with the following Code of Conduct:

- Conduct all business transactions in a straightforward and honest manner.
- Conduct business with active knowledge of and affirmative compliance with federal, state and local laws and regulations.
- We comply with federal, state, and city fair housing laws. Do not engage in discrimination against persons on the basis of their protected-class status.
- Utilize written rental agreements that comply with Washington's Residential Landlord-Tenant Act and local laws. Enforce the terms of each rental agreement consistently among residents.
- Respond promptly to resident complaints and address grievances in a fair, honest and timely fashion.
- Provide proper accounting for all security deposits within the legally allowed time limit.
- Treat residents, fellow members, business suppliers / vendors and association staff with respect and integrity.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Passed by Seattle City Council last December, Ordinance 125222 restricts the amounts a landlord may collect for security deposits and non-refundable fees, and specifies which types of fees are allowed to be collected by a landlord regardless of their expenses in renting a unit. The ordinance also bars landlords from collecting a security deposit, non-refundable fees, pet deposit, and last month's rent at the time of lease conception as is customary in the industry to ensure financial security and performance of the lease terms by the tenant.

The cumulative effect of this, and other ordinances recently enacted by the City, is that the City has crossed a barrier established under state law and our constitution against rent control and oppressive legislation. In particular, small landlords are unduly harmed in attempting to navigate the web of regulatory burdens the City has placed upon them.

The lawsuit filed May 30 in King County Superior Court (RHA v. City of Seattle) challenges this ordinance on the following grounds:

IMPOSITION OF CONTROLS ON RENT

- Landlords have the right to rent property on the financial terms of their choosing.
- There are many things that go in to forming a rental agreement and are a part of the financial agreement, not exclusively the rent value itself. The ordinance violates those rights.

CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

- The City has created an environment of oppressive government regulation which restrict the financial freedoms of landlord and tenant.
- The City provides no mechanisms or resources to landlords to offset the public burdens it has forced upon landlords.
- The ordinance constitutes a violation of Article 1, Section 3 of the State Constitution as depriving landlords of their given property rights without due process.
- The ordinance constitutes an illegal government taking under Article 1, Section 16 of the State Constitution.



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