
Protect Vulnerable Tenants During a Pandemic

Support HB1981 (Delegate Carr)

The Problem:

Virginia law gives landlords the right to enter a tenant's home to make nonemergency repairs and show the unit to prospective future tenants and potential purchasers, as long as they give the tenant a 24-hour notice. But during this pandemic, many tenants, especially those with fragile health conditions, don't want anyone from outside their "bubble" entering their home. This creates a dilemma for landlords.

HB1981's Solution:

- Tenants who don't feel safe having workers enter their homes for routine maintenance can provide written notice to their landlords they don't want any routine maintenance done during a state of emergency based upon a public health threat.
- If a tenant has communicated in writing that they are suspending routine maintenance, they waive any claims against their landlord for failure to do routine maintenance.
- If a tenant who has provided this written notice to the landlord, they can also provide a video walk-through of the unit. This will allow the landlord to show the unit to prospective tenants or purchasers without entering the home.

Benefits of HB1981:

HB1981 also lengthens the notification period for nonemergency maintenance and showing of the unit from 24 to 72 hours, to allow tenants time to raise objections and make alternative arrangements when necessary. This provision is the only change not limited to a public health emergency.

HB1981 contains an emergency clause to be effective only during the COVID-19 crisis.

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