

The Social Policy

Position: LANDLORD-TENANT RELATIONSHIPS

Statement of Position

The League of Women Voters of Alaska supports programs and policies to provide equal opportunity for access *to* housing without discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origins, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression. In addition, League members agree that work to promote fair housing and an adequate supply of housing for low-income families must proceed hand in hand. One of our goals in the work of promoting fair housing is Tenant's Rights. A uniform landlord-tenant act which specifies tenants' rights, and both landlord and tenant obligations in maintaining a fit and habitable dwelling is important in achieving this goal.

Amplification

The League of Women Voters of Alaska will support landlord-tenant legislation that clarifies these points:

- Specification of landlord's obligation in maintaining a fit and habitable dwelling;
- Specification of tenant's obligation in maintaining a fit and habitable dwelling;
- Protection from unfair eviction—tenant should not be evicted for reporting code violations;
- Protection from exorbitant rent increases as a result of code compliance;
- Provision for inspection of units for possible violations;
- Provision for the right to withhold rent if landlord refuses to repair faults that were not caused by tenant—rent monies may be paid into an escrow account until landlord makes needed repairs;
- Specification of the amount a landlord may collect as a security deposit;
- Specification that security deposit is held in a manner that ensures its availability to tenant within a reasonable time after tenancy terminates;
- Specification that landlord must itemize in writing any deductions taken from the security deposit;
- Provisions for subletting by tenant subject to landlord's approval;
- Provision for the reasonable notice to terminate a month-to-month tenancy;
- Provision in the event of a tenant's extended absence;
- Provision for a tenant's abandonment of the rented property;
- Provision for a lease termination by tenant due to events beyond the tenant's control, such as illness, military deployment, care-taking of family member, or unexpected job transfer, and other unforeseen events.
- An agent with power to act on the landlord's behalf should be required in the case of an absentee or out-of-state landlord.

In the enforcement of fair housing laws, speedy resolution should be insured. Mediation and legal redress should be readily available. Avenues for mediation and legal redress should be widely publicized and readily accessible. Adequate funding should be available for public education to inform citizens of the provisions of the legislation, of their fair housing rights, and of procedures to be followed in securing them.

**Adopted 1974; Revised 1994; Reaffirmed each year since at the LWVAK Convention
Updated 2020**