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H.B. 511
135th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Isaacsohn and Humphrey

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SUMMARY

- Requires residential leases be in writing and provide certain information.
- Expands the prohibition on landlord retaliation.
- Requires landlords provide new and prospective tenants with written briefs containing specified information.
- Requires landlords provided adequate notice and allow tenant to be present for inspections.
- Prohibits landlords from employing or contracting with unqualified maintenance workers.
- Prescribes several requirements that must be met before a landlord retains a rental application fee.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Landlord retaliation

Under current law, a landlord may not retaliate against a tenant when the tenant exercises their legal rights regarding the property. Current law prohibits retaliation by increasing rent, decreasing services, or bringing or threatening to bring legal action for possession of the property. The bill expands this prohibition to include interfering with the tenant's right to privacy, harassing the tenant, refusing to honor the rental agreement's terms, or interfering with the tenant's career.¹

¹ R.C. 5321.02.

Landlord duties

The bill requires landlords provide the following written information to prospective tenants prior to signing a lease and to new tenants within 30 days after they take possession of the residential premises:

- The amount and frequency of rent charged;
- The date rent is due;
- The duration of the lease;
- The amount of any security deposit;
- The amount of any nonrent or security deposit fees;
- Whether utilities will be paid by the landlord or the tenant;
- All rules and regulations the landlord imposes on tenants;
- The procedures for submitting and tracking maintenance requests.²

Under the bill, landlords must provide tenants with the opportunity to be present for move-in and move-out inspections. Landlords must also provide sufficient notice to allow the tenant to be present and complete related paperwork. The bill also requires landlords to hire only qualified, licensed contractors or employees for maintenance work. Finally, landlords are required to be courteous, honest, accurate, straightforward, and responsive in communications with tenants.³

Application fees

Under the bill, landlords may not retain any application fee paid by prospective tenants unless the landlord provides the information required above (see **“Landlord duties”**), provides the prospective tenant with a written receipt for the application fee, makes a written offer to enter into a rental agreement with the provided terms within five business days after payment of the application fee, and the tenant either refuses the offer or fails to respond within five business days, whichever occurs first. If all of these conditions are met, the landlord may retain the application fee.⁴

Rental agreements

Under current law, rental agreements may be oral or in writing. The bill requires all rental agreements to be in writing. This written agreement, or a written addendum to the agreement, must include, in addition to information required by current law, the landlord’s telephone number and email address, the amount and frequency of rent charge, the date rent

² R.C. 5321.04(A)(11) and (12).

³ R.C. 5321.04(A)(13), (14), and (15).

⁴ R.C. 5321.04(C).

is due, where the rent is to be delivered, the amount of any security deposit, the amount of any nonrent or security deposit fees, the party responsible for utility payments, all rules and regulations imposed on the tenant by the landlord, a statement that tenants may qualify for free legal representation, and the contact information for Ohio Legal Help.⁵

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	05-07-24

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⁵ R.C. 5321.18(A).