
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE RESIDENTIAL LANDLORD-TENANT CODE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that residential tenants
2 may be vulnerable to landlords who violate the State's
3 residential landlord-tenant code. Tenants who have been
4 subjected to unfair or unlawful treatment may find themselves
5 unable to protect their rights without initiating expensive
6 lawsuits.

7 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to provide more
8 legal protections for residential tenants by allowing tenants
9 who prevail in a lawsuit for a violation of the residential
10 landlord-tenant code to be awarded damages, reasonable
11 attorney's fees, and costs of the suit.

12 SECTION 2. Chapter 521, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
13 amended by adding a new section to part VI to be appropriately
14 designated and to read as follows:

15 "§521- Amount of recovery. Except as otherwise
16 provided in this chapter and notwithstanding any other law to
17 the contrary, any tenant who is directly affected by a violation



1 of this chapter may sue for damages, and if the judgment is for
2 the plaintiff, the plaintiff shall be awarded:

- 3 (1) A sum of no less than \$1,000, or threefold the
4 plaintiff's sustained damages, whichever is greater;
5 (2) Reasonable attorney's fees; and
6 (3) The costs of the suit."

7 SECTION 3. This Act does not affect rights and duties that
8 matured, penalties that were incurred, and proceedings that were
9 begun before its effective date.

10 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

11 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

12
INTRODUCED BY:

Irish La Chica

JAN 17 2025



H.B. NO. 635

Report Title:

Residential Landlord-tenant Code; Damages; Attorney's Fees

Description:

Allows tenants who prevail in a lawsuit for a violation of the Residential Landlord-Tenant Code to be awarded damages, reasonable attorney's fees, and costs of the suit.

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