

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 72 Session of 2025

INTRODUCED BY BOROWSKI, GIRAL, KENYATTA, SMITH-WADE-EL, McANDREW, HOWARD, PIELLI, CIRESI, HOHENSTEIN, KHAN, GUENST, WARREN, SANCHEZ, HILL-EVANS, CEPEDA-FREYTIZ, DONAHUE, BRIGGS, O'MARA, CERRATO, GILLEN, CEPHAS, SOLOMON, KINKEAD AND NEILSON, JANUARY 14, 2025

AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AS AMENDED, APRIL 13, 2026

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of April 6, 1951 (P.L.69, No.20), entitled "An
2 act relating to the rights, obligations and liabilities of
3 landlord and tenant and of parties dealing with them and
4 amending, revising, changing and consolidating the law
5 relating thereto," providing for tenants' rights in cases of
6 violence.

7 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
8 hereby enacts as follows:

9 Section 1. The act of April 6, 1951 (P.L.69, No.20), known
10 as The Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951, is amended by adding an
11 article to read:

12 ARTICLE V-C

13 TENANTS' RIGHTS IN CASES OF VIOLENCE

14 Section 501-C. Definitions.

15 The following words and phrases when used in this article
16 shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
17 context clearly indicates otherwise:

18 "Attesting third party." A law enforcement official,

1 licensed health care professional, licensed social worker,
2 victim advocate or ~~victim service provider.~~ HUMAN SERVICES <--
3 PROVIDER AS DEFINED UNDER 37 PA. CODE § 411.2 (RELATING TO
4 DEFINITIONS).

5 "CRIME." AN ACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL VIOLENCE OR
6 STALKING OR A CRIME AS DEFINED UNDER SECTION 103 OF THE CRIME
7 VICTIMS ACT.

8 "Domestic violence." The occurrence of any of the following
9 acts between family or household members as ~~that phrase is~~ <--
10 defined under 23 Pa.C.S. § 6102(a) (relating to definitions):

11 (1) Intentionally, knowingly or recklessly causing, or
12 attempting to cause, bodily injury, serious bodily injury or
13 sexual assault.

14 (2) Placing another individual in reasonable fear of
15 imminent serious bodily harm.

16 (3) An act of domestic and other violence as defined in
17 55 Pa. Code § 3042.3 (relating to definitions).

18 (4) The infliction of false imprisonment under 18
19 Pa.C.S. § 2903 (relating to false imprisonment).

20 "Domestic violence counselor/advocate." As defined in 23
21 Pa.C.S. § 6102(a).

22 "Eligible tenant." Any of the following:

23 (1) A tenant who is a victim.

24 (2) A TENANT WHO HAS A HOUSEHOLD MEMBER WHO IS A VICTIM. <--

25 ~~(2)~~ (3) A tenant who has an immediate family ~~or~~ <--

26 household member who is a victim and one of the following
27 apply:

28 ~~(i) the victim resides in the same dwelling unit as~~ <--
29 the tenant;

30 ~~(ii)~~ (I) the victim resided within 1,000 feet of the <--

1 tenant's dwelling unit at the time of the applicable act
2 or crime;

3 ~~(iii) (II) the applicable act or crime was committed~~ <--
4 in the tenant's dwelling unit or within 1,000 feet of the
5 tenant's dwelling unit; OR <--

6 ~~(iv) the immediate family or household member of the~~ <--
7 ~~tenant is a victim of stalking; or~~

8 ~~(v) the immediate family or household member of the~~
9 ~~tenant is a victim who was killed in the applicable act~~
10 ~~or crime.~~

11 (III) THE VICTIM WAS MURDERED AS A RESULT OF THE <--
12 APPLICABLE ACT OR CRIME THAT TOOK PLACE WITHIN THE COUNTY
13 IN WHICH THE TENANT'S DWELLING UNIT IS LOCATED OR WITHIN
14 25 MILES OF THE COUNTY IN WHICH THE TENANT'S DWELLING
15 UNIT IS LOCATED.

16 "HOUSEHOLD MEMBER." THE TENANT'S MINOR CHILD OR DEPENDENT OR
17 AN INDIVIDUAL AUTHORIZED IN WRITING BY THE LANDLORD TO RESIDE IN
18 THE DWELLING UNIT. WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION MUST BE PROVIDED IN ONE
19 OF THE FOLLOWING FORMATS:

20 (1) CERTIFIED MAIL;
21 (2) PRIORITY MAIL THROUGH THE UNITED STATES POSTAL
22 SERVICE;
23 (3) ELECTRONIC MAIL;
24 (4) A FORM OF ELECTRONIC OR DIGITAL COMMUNICATION USED
25 BY THE LANDLORD; OR
26 (5) ANY OTHER FORM OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SPECIFIED IN
27 THE LEASE.

28 "Immediate family or household member." Any of the <--
29 following:

30 (1) A child or legal ward DEPENDENT of the tenant, <--

1 whether of a biological, foster, adoptive or step
2 relationship and regardless of age.

3 (2) A parent, stepparent or legal guardian of a tenant
4 or of a tenant's spouse or domestic partner or an individual
5 who stood in loco parentis to the tenant when the tenant was
6 a minor child.

7 (3) An individual to whom the tenant is legally married
8 or the domestic partner under the laws of any state or <--
9 political subdivision.

10 (4) A sibling, grandparent or grandchild, whether of a
11 biological, foster, adoptive or step relationship of the
12 tenant or the tenant's spouse or domestic partner.

13 ~~(5) An individual who resides in the same dwelling unit~~ <--
14 ~~as a tenant.~~

15 "MURDER." AN ACT OR CONDUCT THAT WOULD CONSTITUTE AN OFFENSE <--
16 UNDER 18 PA.C.S. § 2502 (RELATING TO MURDER).

17 "Rape crisis center." As defined in 42 Pa.C.S. § 5945.1(a)
18 (relating to confidential communications with sexual assault
19 counselors).

20 "Responsible party." An individual who commits, or is
21 alleged to have committed, an act of which a tenant or an
22 immediate family MEMBER or household member of the tenant is a <--
23 victim.

24 "Sexual violence." As defined in 42 Pa.C.S. § 62A03
25 (relating to definitions).

26 "Stalking." As defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 2709.1 (relating to
27 stalking).

28 "Tenant." An individual who is a party to a written lease of
29 a dwelling unit and is entitled to possession of the dwelling
30 unit.

1 "Victim." Any of the following:

2 (1) An individual against whom an act ~~of~~ CONSTITUTING <--
3 domestic violence, sexual violence or stalking was committed
4 or attempted, regardless of whether a responsible party was
5 arrested or adjudicated for the commission ARRESTED, CHARGED <--
6 OR CONVICTED of a crime.

7 (2) An individual against whom a crime as defined in
8 section 103 of the act of November 24, 1998 (P.L.882, <--
9 No.111), known as the Crime Victims Act, was committed ~~or~~ <--
10 attempted, regardless of whether an alleged responsible party
11 was arrested or adjudicated ARRESTED, CHARGED OR CONVICTED <--
12 for the commission of the crime, if the crime ~~or attempt:~~ <--

13 (i) directly resulted in the individual's physical
14 injury or death; or

15 (ii) included the responsible party exhibiting,
16 drawing, brandishing or using a firearm or other deadly
17 weapon or instrument and directly resulted in the mental
18 injury of the individual against whom the crime was
19 committed.

20 (3) An individual who is an intervenor as defined in
21 section 103 of the Crime Victims Act in an act or crime
22 described under paragraph (1) or (2).

23 (4) An individual who was physically present at the
24 scene of an act or crime described under paragraph (1) or (2)
25 and witnessed the act or crime and who, as a direct result,
26 suffers physical or mental injury.

27 "Victim advocate." An individual, whether paid or serving as
28 a volunteer, who provides services to victims under the auspices
29 or supervision of a victim service provider, DISTRICT ATTORNEY <--
30 OR court or law enforcement ~~or prosecution~~ agency. <--

1 "Victim service provider." An agency or organization that
2 provides services to victims. The term includes a rape crisis
3 center or domestic violence counselor/advocate.

4 Section 502-C. Early release or termination of lease.

5 ~~(a) Release authorized. If a tenant is an eligible tenant~~ <--
6 ~~and the tenant needs to relocate as a result of an applicable~~
7 ~~act or crime, the tenant may be released from a lease by~~
8 ~~providing a notice in accordance with subsection (b).~~

9 (A) REQUIRED RELEASE.--AN ELIGIBLE TENANT SHALL BE RELEASED <--
10 FROM A LEASE BY PROVIDING NOTICE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTIONS
11 (B) AND (C). PROVIDING NOTICE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTIONS (B)
12 AND (C) DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A BREACH OF THE LEASE.

13 (b) Required release NOTICE.-- <--

14 (1) An eligible tenant shall be released from a lease if
15 the tenant provides the landlord with a valid notice under
16 this subsection no later than 120 days from the date of any
17 of the following, whichever is later:

18 (i) The most recent occurrence of an act or crime
19 which makes the tenant an eligible tenant.

20 (ii) A document described under paragraph (2)(ii)
21 (A), (B), (C), (D), (E) or (F) is issued.

22 (iii) The responsible party is released from a
23 prison, jail, juvenile detention facility or any other
24 detention facility or institution.

25 (2) A valid notice from the tenant under paragraph (1)
26 shall include:

27 ~~(i) A SIGNED written notice signed by the tenant of~~ <--
28 ~~the tenant's intent to be THAT THE TENANT BE released~~ <--
29 from the lease as of a specific date. The written notice
30 under this subparagraph shall include a statement that

1 the tenant intends to relocate for the safety or the
2 physical or mental well-being of the tenant or an
3 immediate family MEMBER or household member of the tenant <--
4 as a direct result of an act of which the tenant or an
5 immediate family MEMBER or household member is OR WAS a <--
6 victim.

7 (ii) Unless the landlord states in writing that <--
8 additional documentation is not necessary, one ONE of the <--
9 following DOCUMENTS: <--

10 (A) A copy of a valid court order, OTHER THAN AN <--
11 EX PARTE ORDER, that restrains the responsible party
12 from contact with the tenant or an immediate family
13 MEMBER or household member of the tenant. <--

14 (B) A letter from a licensed medical or mental
15 health provider indicating that the tenant or an
16 immediate family MEMBER or household member of the <--
17 tenant is a victim.

18 (C) A police report documenting the act of which
19 the tenant or an immediate family MEMBER or household <--
20 member of the tenant is a victim.

21 (D) Evidence that the responsible party has been
22 charged with or convicted of an act of which the
23 tenant or an immediate family MEMBER or household <--
24 member of the tenant is a victim.

25 (E) A written certification form developed by
26 the Office of Victim Advocate and signed by the
27 tenant and an attesting third party in accordance
28 with section 503-C.

29 (F) If the tenant's immediate family MEMBER or <--
30 household member is deceased as a result of a crime <--

1 MURDERED, any of the following: <--

2 (I) A written verification of death, burial
3 or memorial services from a mortuary, funeral
4 home, burial society, crematorium, religious
5 institution, medical examiner or government
6 agency.

7 (II) A published obituary.

8 (III) A death certificate.

9 (3) VALID NOTICE UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) MUST BE PROVIDED IN <--
10 ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FORMATS:

11 (I) CERTIFIED MAIL.

12 (II) PRIORITY MAIL THROUGH THE UNITED STATES POSTAL
13 SERVICE.

14 (III) ELECTRONIC MAIL.

15 (IV) ANY OTHER FORM OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION
16 SPECIFIED IN THE LEASE.

17 (c) Effect of notice.--After a valid notice is provided by a
18 tenant in accordance with subsection (b), the following shall
19 apply:

20 (1) The tenant shall be released from the lease no later
21 than 30 days after the date the notice was provided, or on
22 the date specified in the notice under subsection (b) (2) (i),
23 whichever is later, if AND the tenant vacates SHALL VACATE <--
24 the dwelling unit on or before the applicable date OF <--
25 TERMINATION.

26 (2) The tenant shall not be liable for rent, EARLY <--
27 TERMINATION FEES or other obligations under the lease
28 accruing after the date of the termination.

29 (3) The termination shall not affect the tenant's
30 obligations or outstanding rents or arrears under the lease

1 accruing before the date of the termination.

2 (d) Construction.--Nothing in this section shall be <--

3 (1) NOTHING IN THIS SECTION SHALL BE construed to <--

4 relieve a tenant who is not an eligible tenant from the
5 tenant's obligations under a lease. If there are multiple
6 tenants who are parties to a lease, the release of one or
7 more tenants under this section shall not terminate the lease
8 with respect to the other nonterminating tenants. A tenant
9 released from a lease under this section shall not be liable
10 to the landlord or any other person for rent accruing after
11 the tenant's release or for actual damages resulting from the
12 tenant's release from the lease.

13 (2) NOTHING IN THIS SECTION SHALL BE CONSTRUED TO <--

14 PROHIBIT A LANDLORD FROM ALLOWING A TENANT TO TERMINATE A
15 LEASE EARLY FOR ANY REASON WITHOUT REQUIRING DOCUMENTATION.

16 (e) Limitation.--A tenant may not seek the termination of or
17 a release from a lease under this section on the basis of an act
18 for which the tenant is the A responsible party. <--

19 Section 503-C. Certification form requirements.

20 (a) Certification form.--The Office of Victim Advocate shall
21 develop and display on the Office of Victim Advocate's publicly
22 accessible Internet website a certification form with the
23 requirements specified under subsection (b).

24 (b) Required information.--

25 (1) A tenant shall verify all of the following
26 information in the certification form developed by the Office
27 of Victim Advocate for the purpose of section 502-C(b)(2)(ii)

28 (E):

29 (i) The tenant's name and the address of the
30 dwelling unit.

1 (ii) The name of ~~the~~ EACH victim if different from <--
2 the tenant's name.

3 (iii) The name of the responsible party if IT IS <--
4 known and can be safely disclosed.

5 (iv) The approximate LOCATIONS AND dates and <--
6 ~~locations~~ during which the act or acts ~~which~~ THAT qualify <--
7 the tenant as an eligible tenant occurred, including the
8 most recent date.

9 (v) A statement that the tenant intends to relocate
10 for the safety or the physical or mental well-being of
11 the tenant or an immediate family MEMBER or household <--
12 member of the tenant as a direct result of an act of
13 which the tenant or an immediate family MEMBER or <--
14 household member is a victim.

15 (vi) The date on which the tenant intends to vacate <--
16 the dwelling unit TERMINATE THE LEASE. <--

17 (2) An attesting third party shall verify all of the
18 following information in the certification form developed by <--
19 the Office of Victim Advocate for the purpose of section <--
20 section 502-C(b) (2) (ii) (E):

21 (i) The name and business telephone number of the
22 attesting third party.

23 (ii) The capacity in which the attesting third party
24 received the information that the tenant or an immediate
25 family MEMBER or household member was a victim. <--

26 (iii) A statement that the attesting third party:
27 (A) read the tenant's verification under
28 paragraph (1) and has been advised by the tenant that
29 the tenant or an immediate family MEMBER or household <--
30 member of the tenant is a victim;

1 (B) believes that the tenant or an immediate
2 family MEMBER or household member of the tenant is a <--
3 victim;

4 (C) believes the tenant is an eligible tenant;

5 (D) believes that the tenant needs to relocate
6 for the safety or the physical or mental well-being
7 of the tenant or an immediate family MEMBER or <--
8 household member of the tenant as a direct result of
9 an act of which the tenant or an immediate family
10 MEMBER or household member is a victim; and <--

11 (E) understands that the verification under this
12 paragraph may be used as the basis for releasing the
13 tenant from a lease.

14 (c) Confidentiality.--Furnishing evidence or providing a
15 verification under this section or section 502-C shall not waive
16 a confidentiality or privilege that may exist between the tenant
17 or victim and a AN ATTESTING third party. <--

18 Section 504-C. Change of locks.

19 (a) Right of tenants.--Subject to subsections (b) and (c),
20 if a tenant is an eligible tenant and the tenant has a
21 reasonable fear that a responsible party or another individual
22 acting on the responsible party's behalf may attempt to gain
23 access to the TENANT'S dwelling unit ~~that the tenant leases, the~~ <--
24 tenant may change or rekey the locks or other security devices
25 for the dwelling unit. A tenant who changes or rekeys the locks
26 shall notify the landlord within ~~48~~ 24 hours and make <--
27 arrangements to immediately provide a key or other means of
28 access to the landlord or any other tenant, other than the
29 responsible party, who is a party to a lease.

30 (b) Right of landlords.--If the locks or other security

1 devices are changed or rekeyed under subsection (a), the
2 landlord may change or rekey the locks to ensure compatibility
3 with the landlord's master key or other means of access or
4 otherwise accommodate the landlord's reasonable commercial
5 needs.

6 (c) Prohibition.--If a responsible party is a party to a
7 lease, a tenant may not change or rekey the locks or other
8 security devices under subsection (a) unless:

9 (1) there is a court order, ~~other than an ex parte~~ <--
10 ~~order,~~ expressly requiring the responsible party to vacate
11 the dwelling unit or prohibiting the responsible party from
12 having contact with the tenant or an immediate family MEMBER <--
13 or household member of the tenant who is a victim of the
14 responsible party; and

15 (2) the tenant provides a copy of the court order under
16 paragraph (1) to the landlord.

17 (d) Civil relief.--A responsible party shall not be entitled
18 to damages or other civil relief against a landlord or tenant
19 who complies in good faith with this section.

20 Section 505-C. Prohibition on certain acts by landlords.

21 (a) Prohibition.--A landlord may not do any of the following
22 WITH RESPECT TO THE TENANT, PROVIDED THE TENANT IS NOT THE <--
23 RESPONSIBLE PARTY:

24 (1) Assess a fee or penalty against a tenant or
25 otherwise retaliate against the tenant solely for exercising
26 a right granted under this article.

27 (2) Consider a tenant for any purpose, due solely to the
28 tenant exercising a right granted under this article, to have
29 breached the terms of the lease.

30 ~~(3) By reason of a tenant exercising a right granted <--~~

~~under this article, withhold return to the tenant of a security deposit or other escrows to which the tenant is otherwise entitled due to the tenant terminating a lease under this article. The provisions of Article V shall otherwise apply with regard to the retention or return of escrow funds and to other sums that may be withheld by the landlord. Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect a tenant's liability for unpaid rent or other amounts owed to the landlord before the termination of a lease under this act.~~

(3) REFUSE TO RETURN A TENANT'S SECURITY DEPOSIT SOLELY <--
BECAUSE AN ELIGIBLE TENANT EXERCISED A RIGHT GRANTED UNDER
THIS ARTICLE. THE PROVISIONS OF ARTICLE V SHALL OTHERWISE
APPLY WITH REGARD TO THE RETENTION OR RETURN OF ESCROW FUNDS,
INCLUDING SECURITY DEPOSITS, AND OTHER SUMS THAT MAY BE
WITHHELD BY THE LANDLORD.

(4) Increase or threaten to increase the rent, security
deposit or fees payable under a lease, decrease or threaten
to decrease services required under a lease or this act,
terminate or threaten to terminate a lease, ~~refuse to renew a~~<--
~~lease,~~ serve or A NOTICE TO QUIT OR OTHERWISE threaten to <--
~~serve a notice to~~ terminate a periodic tenancy PRIOR TO THE <--
END OF THE TERM, bring or threaten to bring an action for
possession, ~~refuse to lease a dwelling unit~~ or impose <--
different rules or selectively enforce the landlord's rules
because of any of the following:

(i) A tenant or an immediate family MEMBER or <--
household member of the tenant is or has been a victim.

(ii) A tenant or proposed tenant has previously
exercised a right granted under this article.

1 ~~(iii) Criminal activity occurred relating to an act~~ <--
2 ~~or acts of which a tenant or an immediate family or~~
3 ~~household member of the tenant is a victim and the tenant~~
4 ~~is not a responsible party.~~

5 ~~(iv) (III) Police or emergency personnel responded~~ <--
6 ~~to a good faith complaint of activities relating to an~~ <--
7 ~~THE act or acts of which the tenant or an immediate~~ <--
8 ~~family MEMBER or household member of the tenant is a~~ <--
9 ~~victim and the tenant is not a responsible party.~~ <--

10 ~~(5) Disclose CONFIDENTIAL information reported to the~~ <--
11 ~~landlord in a notice under section 502 C to another party~~ <--
12 ~~PURSUANT TO THIS ARTICLE unless any of the following apply:~~ <--

13 ~~(i) The tenant provides specific time limited and~~ <--
14 ~~contemporaneous consent to the disclosure in writing~~
15 ~~WRITTEN CONSENT.~~ <--

16 ~~(ii) The information is required to be disclosed by~~
17 ~~a court order or any other Federal or State law.~~ <--

18 ~~(III) THE INFORMATION IS PROVIDED IN THE NORMAL~~ <--
19 ~~COURSE OF BUSINESS TO A LANDLORD'S PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS,~~
20 ~~INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, AN ATTORNEY, ACCOUNTANT OR~~
21 ~~FINANCIAL ADVISOR. IF INFORMATION IS PROVIDED TO A~~
22 ~~PROFESSIONAL ADVISOR UNDER THIS PARAGRAPH, THE~~
23 ~~PROFESSIONAL ADVISOR IS PROHIBITED FROM SHARING THE~~
24 ~~INFORMATION WITH ANY OTHER THIRD PARTY.~~

25 ~~(B) CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.--THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS AND~~
26 ~~INFORMATION CONTAINED WITHIN THE DOCUMENTS SHALL BE CONFIDENTIAL~~
27 ~~AND MAY NOT BE DISCLOSED, EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (A)~~

28 ~~(5):~~

29 ~~(1) NOTICE OF THE ELIGIBLE TENANT'S INTENT TO RELOCATE.~~

30 ~~(2) MEDICAL RECORDS OF THE ELIGIBLE TENANT OR TENANT'S~~

1 HOUSEHOLD MEMBER OR IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBER, INCLUDING
2 LETTERS FROM LICENSED MEDICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS
3 DESCRIBED IN SECTION 502-C.

4 (3) COURT DOCUMENTS THAT ARE NOT PUBLICLY AVAILABLE.

5 (4) LAW ENFORCEMENT RECORDS.

6 (5) WRITTEN CERTIFICATION FORMS SIGNED BY THE TENANT AND
7 AN ATTESTING THIRD PARTY DESCRIBED IN SECTION 503-C.

8 (6) WRITTEN VERIFICATIONS OF DEATH AS DESCRIBED IN
9 SECTION 503-C THAT ARE NOT PUBLICLY AVAILABLE.

10 ~~(b)~~ (C) Willful violation.--

<--

11 (1) If a landlord willfully violates this section, a
12 tenant may terminate a lease or defend an action for
13 possession on the grounds that the landlord willfully
14 violated this section or obtain appropriate injunctive
15 relief.

16 (2) In the action under paragraph (1), the court shall
17 award the tenant an amount equal to two months' rent, or
18 double actual damages, whichever is greater.

19 Section 2. The addition of Article V-C of the act shall
20 apply to leases entered into or extended on or after the
21 effective date of this section.

22 Section 3. This act shall take effect in ~~120~~ 180 days.

<--