

Quaker Voice on Washington Public Policy
Advocacy for Rent Stabilization in 2024 Legislative Session

Economic Justice Working Group
Housing Justice Team

C. Ferguson / 17 Oct 2023 + 5 Jan 2023

Quaker Voice advocates for housing that all people can afford to purchase or rent, allows easy transportation between work and home, and is economically and racially diverse. Dramatic increases in rental rates, combined with industry practices and policies that destabilize households that rent, is seriously hindering realization of this vision as nearly 50 percent of households in Washington now spend more than 30% of household income on rent. This in turn constricts household funds available for food, education, health care, transportation, and living where one needs or desires to live.

Quaker Voice advocates for these bills now under consideration in the 2024 legislative session:

[House Bill 2114](#) / [Senate Bill 5961](#)

Concerning the creation of housing stability for tenants by limiting rent and fee increases, requiring notice of rent and fee increases, limiting fees and deposits, establishing a landlord resource center and associated services, authorizing tenant lease termination, creating parity between lease types, and providing for attorney general enforcement. Sponsors HB 2114: Reps. Emily Alvarado, Nicole Macri, Alex Ramel, Strom Peterson, Sharlett Mena. Sponsors SB 5961: Sens. Yasmin Trudeau, T'wina Nobles

Some additional talking points:

- In recent years rental rates have mushroomed throughout the state in large and small population centers alike. This is now a statewide problem, not just an urban issue.
- Full-time workers in Washington now need to earn more than \$36 an hour to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment. This is the fifth-highest “housing wage” in the U.S.
- “Rent increases have forced over 136,000 of Washington's households to move in the first six months of 2023 (not a typo!)” -- Washington Low Income Housing Alliance newsletter.
- Wage rates vary considerably around the state, so it can be useful to look at percentage of income rather than actual dollars spent on rent. In which case, “the percentage of Walla Walla residents who were cost-burdened [in 2022] — spending 30% or more of their income on rental costs — was higher than in Seattle. That figure was 56% for Walla Walla renters, compared to 44% for Seattle renters.” ([Crosscut, “Rising Rents Are Drowning Washington's Smaller Cities,” Feb. 8, 2023](#))