

STATE OF NEW YORK

767--A

2017-2018 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 4, 2017

Introduced by Sen. STEWART-COUSINS -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Aging -- committee discharged and said bill committed to the Committee on Judiciary -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the real property law, in relation to prohibiting the termination of tenancy in certain housing occupied by senior citizens and/or persons with disabilities

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The real property law is amended by adding a new section
2 228-a to read as follows:

3 § 228-a. Tenancy in rental buildings; senior citizens; persons with
4 disabilities. 1. Notwithstanding the provisions of section two hundred
5 twenty-eight of this article or any other provision to the contrary, if
6 substantially all of the lessees or tenants occupying units in a rental
7 building are over sixty-five years of age and/or are persons with disa-
8 bilities, the lessor may not terminate or fail to renew a lease for
9 premises in such building or terminate a tenancy at will or at suffer-
10 ance, except for cause involving actions of the tenant that violate the
11 terms of the lease, such as the non-payment of rent, without the prior
12 approval of a court of competent jurisdiction. In determining whether
13 to grant approval, the court shall consider factors including: whether
14 the lessor is operating the rental building at a profit or loss; the
15 need for any major capital repairs or improvements that cannot be
16 performed while the tenants are in occupancy; any written or oral
17 representations made by the lessor to tenants about how long they could
18 remain in occupancy; any alternative housing being offered by the
19 lessor, the number of affected tenants; and the length of time the
20 affected tenants have lived in their apartments. At the time of filing
21 any action affecting more than one lease and seeking such prior approval

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 from a court of competent jurisdiction, the lessor shall notify all the
2 lessees and tenants occupying units in the rental building that are over
3 sixty-five years of age and/or are persons with disabilities of the
4 filing of such action. The lessor shall also notify at such time any
5 village, town, city and county, except counties inside the city of New
6 York, in which such rental building is located of the filing of such
7 action. While such action is pending, the lessor shall notify any
8 prospective lessee or tenant prior to the signing of a lease for prem-
9 ises in such rental building of the pendency of such action.

10 2. Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, a lessor of a rental
11 building where substantially all of the lessees or tenants occupying
12 units in the rental building are over sixty-five years of age and/or are
13 persons with disabilities may not increase the rent in such rental
14 building by more than one percent above the percentage change in the
15 consumer price index since the start of the tenancy or most recent
16 renewal, whichever is more recent at the time of renewal of a lease and
17 may not increase the rent more than one time annually.

18 3. Every lessor of rental buildings where substantially all of the
19 lessees or tenants occupying units are over sixty-five years of age
20 and/or are persons with disabilities, shall notify prospective tenants
21 of the provision of this section. Such notice shall be in writing, upon
22 the rental application, and shall include, in plain and simple English,
23 in conspicuous print of at least eighteen point type, an explanation of
24 a tenant's rights under this section and all other applicable require-
25 ments and duties relating thereto.

26 Such notice shall read as follows:

27 NOTICE TO SENIOR CITIZENS AND/OR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES:

28 BUILDING TENANCY

29 SECTION 228-A OF THE REAL PROPERTY LAW OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
30 PROHIBITS A LESSOR FROM TERMINATING OR FAILING TO RENEW A LEASE OR
31 TENANCY FOR PREMISES IN CERTAIN HOUSING FOR SENIOR CITIZENS AND/OR
32 PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, EXCEPT FOR CAUSE.

33 (CONSULT SECTION 228-A OF THE REAL PROPERTY LAW FOR SPECIFIC
34 INFORMATION AND CRITERIA.)

35 4. Any lessor who violates the provisions of this section shall be
36 liable to the lessee or tenant affected thereby for reasonable costs,
37 including reasonable attorney's fees, which fees shall be taxed and
38 collected as a part of the costs in the action, and for the reasonable
39 expenses incurred by the affected lessee or tenant in relocating to a
40 new residence. Additionally, lessors shall return initiation fees and
41 security deposits to lessees or tenants, where appropriate. An action
42 to recover for such loss, damage or injury may be brought in any court
43 of competent jurisdiction by the affected tenant or lessee.

44 5. As used in this section:

45 (a) "lessor" means the owner or landlord of a rental building, or his
46 or her agent;

47 (b) "person with a disability" means an individual who is currently
48 receiving social security disability insurance (SSDI) or supplemental
49 security income (SSI) benefits under the federal social security act or
50 disability pension or disability compensation benefits provided by the
51 United States department of veterans affairs or those previously eligi-
52 ble by virtue of receiving disability benefits under the supplemental
53 security income program or the social security disability program and
54 currently receiving medical assistance benefits based on determination
55 of disability as provided in section three hundred sixty-six of the
56 social services law;

1 (c) "rental building" means twenty or more residential units; and
2 (d) "substantially all" means approximately eighty percent or more of
3 the lessees or tenants occupying units in a rental building, provided
4 that the court need not rely on a strict percentage when, in its deter-
5 mination, the interests of justice warrant it.
6 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.