

STATE OF NEW YORK

2811

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 25, 2021

Introduced by Sens. KAVANAGH, BIAGGI, RIVERA, SKOUFIS -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Housing, Construction and Community Development

AN ACT to amend the executive law, the multiple residence law and the multiple dwelling law, in relation to a statewide residential rental registry

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

1 Section 1. The executive law is amended by adding a new section 381-a
2 to read as follows:

3 § 381-a. Statewide rental registry. 1. The secretary shall administer
4 a statewide residential rental registry pursuant to the requirements of
5 this section and shall develop a public online rental registry database
6 designed to receive information from landlords and local governments and
7 code enforcement agencies and to disseminate such information to the
8 public.

9 2. The following words or terms when used in this section are defined
10 as follows:

11 (a) "Code enforcement" means the administration and enforcement of the
12 uniform fire prevention code and building code promulgated in accordance
13 with sections three hundred seventy-seven and three hundred seventy-
14 eight of this article, the state energy conservation construction code
15 adopted in accordance with article eleven of the energy law, and any
16 local building and fire regulations and any local residential housing
17 codes enacted or adopted by any local government that are in effect
18 pursuant to section three hundred seventy-nine of this article.

19 (b) "Covered dwelling" means a dwelling which is either rented,
20 leased, let or hired out, to be occupied, or is occupied as the resi-
21 dence or home of two or more families living independently of each
22 other.

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

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1 (c) "Dwelling" means any building or structure or portion thereof
2 which is occupied in whole or in part as the home, residence, or sleep-
3 ing place of one or more human beings.

4 (d) "Family" means either a person occupying a dwelling and maintain-
5 ing a household, with not more than four boarders, roomers or lodgers,
6 or two or more persons occupying a dwelling, living together and main-
7 taining a common household, with not more than four boarders, roomers or
8 lodgers. A "boarder", "roomer" or "lodger" residing with a family shall
9 mean a person living within the household who pays a consideration for
10 such residence and does not occupy such space within the household as an
11 incident of employment therein.

12 (e) "Managing agent" means a natural person who is over the age of
13 twenty-one years and a resident of the county in which the property is
14 located, resides within thirty miles of the property, or customarily and
15 regularly attends a business office maintained in the county or within
16 thirty miles of the property, and is designated by the owner to receive
17 service of notices and summons issued by the local code enforcement
18 agency. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed as abrogating or
19 impairing the power of any local government to promulgate more restric-
20 tive definitions or rules related to managing agents.

21 (f) "Owner" means the owner or owners of the freehold of the premises
22 or lessor estate therein, a mortgagee or vendee in possession, assignee
23 of rents, receiver, executor, trustee, agent, or any other person, firm
24 or corporation, directly or indirectly in control of a dwelling.

25 (g) "Private dwelling" means any building or structure designed and
26 occupied exclusively for residential purposes by not more than one fami-
27 ly.

28 (h) "Secretary" means the secretary of state.

29 3. The owner of a covered dwelling shall register such dwelling with
30 the department of state annually in accordance with the rules and regu-
31 lations prescribed by the secretary, except that registration with the
32 department of state shall not be required where the owner is required to
33 register with a local government under which the property is situated in
34 a manner that complies with the rules and regulations prescribed by the
35 secretary pursuant to this section.

36 4. An owner who is required to register under this section and who
37 fails to register: (a) shall be subject to a civil penalty of the great-
38 er of two hundred fifty dollars or twenty-five dollars per residential
39 unit contained in the covered dwelling, and in no event shall a covered
40 dwelling be considered properly registered under this section until any
41 penalty that is due has been paid; and (b) shall be denied the right to
42 recover possession of the premises for nonpayment of rent during the
43 period of noncompliance, and shall, at the discretion of the court,
44 suffer a stay of proceeding to recover rents, during such period. In any
45 action to recover possession under section seven hundred eleven of the
46 real property actions and proceedings law, the owner shall allege that
47 they are properly registered under this section.

48 5. Any local government with a rental registration or rental registry
49 certificate program, ordinance, regulation or other law may continue to
50 maintain such registry or program but shall submit to the department of
51 state all information required under this section in a method prescribed
52 by the secretary. If such program, ordinance, or law does not comply
53 with the rules and regulations prescribed by the secretary pursuant to
54 this section, the owner shall register all covered dwellings with the
55 department of state.

6. The secretary shall develop and maintain an online portal for local governments to submit registration and code enforcement violations to the department of state as required under this section.

7. The secretary shall promulgate rules and regulations prescribing standards for administration and enforcement of the statewide rental registry. Such rules and regulations shall address (a) information to be collected during registration including, but not limited to:

(i) a valid identifying address of the property and the appropriate designations of all rental units on the property;

(ii) the total number of rooms, the number of bathrooms, and the number of bedrooms in each rental unit;

(iii) the accessibility features, if any, of the building and each rental unit;

(iv) whether a unit is subject to any rent regulation or regulatory agreement;

(v) the legal name of the owner or owners, including, but not limited to, the partners, general partners, LLC members, and shareholders;

(vi) a physical address, mailing address, and telephone number for each owner. The physical address and telephone number contained in the registration shall not constitute a public record and shall be accessible only to duly authorized employees of local government agencies or the department of state and used exclusively by such personnel in connection with an emergency arising on the premises for which the owner is responsible or for such purposes as the secretary shall authorize;

(vii) the name, physical address, mailing address, and telephone number for the managing agent of the rental unit, if any; and

(viii) where the local government requires regular inspection of rental units, the date of the last inspection in each unit, the number and type of violations issued during the inspection, and whether each violation has been corrected.

(b) a schedule of reasonable registration fees based on the type of dwelling and number of units registered;

(c) the process and timeframe for updating the registration upon a change in title, address, or managing agent; and

(d) to the extent practicable, the submission of reports by local governments to the department of state containing all violations reported in covered dwellings since the prior submission that shall occur at minimum on a monthly basis. Where a local government lacks the technical capacity to submit such reports, the department shall provide assistance to facilitate and improve capacity to collect code violation data in a machine-readable format for submission to the department.

8. The secretary shall create and maintain through the department of state's website a public online searchable database of residential rental units registered under this section. The public shall be able to search by, at a minimum, the address of the dwelling, the name of the owner, and tax map designation. The database shall generate a report of the last valid information registered with the department and information submitted by local governments as required by this section. Such report shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following information:

(a) the names of each registered property owner and the managing agent, if any;

(b) the address of each registered property owned by such registered owner;

(c) the address of the managing agent, if any;

(d) the number of registered rental units on the property;

1 (e) the current number of outstanding violations issued by any code
2 enforcement agencies, disaggregated by violations that are immediately
3 hazardous, hazardous, and non-hazardous where such designation is avail-
4 able;

5 (f) the number of findings of harassment currently on record with any
6 code enforcement agencies;

7 (g) the number and types of active violations and orders issued by any
8 code enforcement agencies, including a description of each violation,
9 the status of each violation or order, and the date each violation or
10 order was issued including any violations that were active within the
11 year prior to the date the report is generated; and

12 (h) the date the information was last updated and the date the portfo-
13 lio is generated.

14 9. In any action to recover possession of a rental unit or to enforce
15 housing maintenance standards in county court, the court of a police
16 justice of the village, a justice court, a court of civil jurisdiction
17 in a city or a district court, (a) the visually displayed or (b) the
18 printed computerized portfolio registration and violation files main-
19 tained by the department of state pursuant to this section and all other
20 computerized data as shall be relevant to the enforcement of state and
21 local laws for the establishment and maintenance of housing standards,
22 shall be prima facie evidence of any matter stated therein and the
23 courts shall take judicial notice thereof as if the same were certified
24 as true under the seal and signature of the secretary.

25 10. Registration of covered dwellings under this section shall
26 commence one year from the effective date of this section. The public
27 online searchable database shall be active no later than two years from
28 the effective date of this section. All information related to code
29 violations and harassment provided through the database shall be
30 prospective from the date it becomes active unless such information is
31 otherwise available in electronic form at the time the database becomes
32 active.

33 § 2. Section 307 of the multiple residence law is amended to read as
34 follows:

35 § 307. Records and searches. (a) All records of the department shall
36 be public. Upon request the department shall be required to make a
37 search and issue a certificate of any of its records, including
38 violations, and shall have the power to charge and collect reasonable
39 fees for searches or certificates.

40 (b) In any action to recover possession of a rental unit or to enforce
41 housing maintenance standards in county court, the court of a police
42 justice of the village, a justice court, a court of civil jurisdiction
43 in a city or a district court either (i) the visually displayed or (ii)
44 the printed computerized portfolio registration and violation files
45 maintained by the department of state pursuant to section three hundred
46 eighty-one-a of the executive law and all other computerized data as
47 shall be relevant to the enforcement of state and local laws for the
48 establishment and maintenance of housing standards, shall be prima facie
49 evidence of any matter stated therein and the courts shall take judicial
50 notice thereof as if the same were certified as true under the seal and
51 signature of the secretary of state.

52 § 3. Subdivision 3 of section 328 of the multiple dwelling law, as
53 amended by chapter 403 of the laws of 1983, is amended to read as
54 follows:

55 3. In any action or proceeding before the housing part of the New York
56 city civil court either (a) the visually displayed or (b) the printed

1 computerized violation files of the department responsible for maintain-
2 ing such files, portfolio registration and violation files maintained by
3 the department of state pursuant to section three hundred eighty-one-a
4 of the executive law, and all other computerized data as shall be rele-
5 vant to the enforcement of state and local laws for the establishment
6 and maintenance of housing standards, including but not limited to the
7 name, address and telephone number of the present owner of the building
8 and whether or not he is a member in good standing of the rent stabili-
9 zation association or registered pursuant to the emergency tenant
10 protection act of nineteen seventy-four or the rent stabilization law of
11 nineteen hundred sixty-nine where one or more dwelling units therein are
12 subject to the rent stabilization law, shall be prima facie evidence of
13 any matter stated therein and the courts shall take judicial notice
14 thereof as if same were certified as true under the seal and signature
15 of the commissioner of that department.

16 § 4. This act shall take effect immediately.