

LEGISLATIVE BILL 433

Approved by the Governor May 30, 2019

Introduced by Hansen, M., 26; Linehan, 39; Blood, 3.

A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to the Uniform Residential Landlord and Tenant Act; to amend sections 76-1416 and 76-1431, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska; to change provisions relating to the return of security deposits and damages and the period of time relating to a written notice to quit; and to repeal the original sections.

Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

Section 1. Section 76-1416, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

76-1416 (1) A landlord may not demand or receive security, however denominated, in an amount or value in excess of one month's periodic rent, except that a pet deposit not in excess of one-fourth of one month's periodic rent may be demanded or received when appropriate, but this subsection shall not be applicable to housing agencies organized or existing under the Nebraska Housing Agency Act.

(2) Upon termination of the tenancy, property or money held by the landlord as prepaid rent and security may be applied to the payment of rent and the amount of damages which the landlord has suffered by reason of the tenant's noncompliance with the rental agreement or section 76-1421. The balance, if any, and a written itemization shall be delivered or mailed to the tenant within fourteen days after the date of termination of the tenancy. If no mailing address or instructions are provided by the tenant to the landlord, the landlord shall mail, by first-class mail, the balance of the security deposit to be returned, if any, and a written itemization of the amount of the security deposit not returned to the tenant's last-known mailing address. If the mailing is returned as undeliverable, or if the returned balance of the security deposit remains outstanding thirty days after the date of the mailing, the landlord shall, not later than sixty days after the date of the mailing, remit the outstanding balance of the security deposit to the State Treasurer for disposition pursuant to the Uniform Disposition of Unclaimed Property Act demand and designation of the location where payment may be made or mailed.

(3) If the landlord fails to comply with subsection (2) of this section, the tenant may recover the property and money due him or her, court costs, and reasonable attorney's fees. In addition, if the landlord's failure to comply with subsection (2) of this section is willful and not in good faith, the tenant may recover an amount equal to one month's periodic rent or two times the amount of the security deposit, whichever is less, as liquidated damages.

(4) This section does not preclude the landlord or tenant from recovering other damages to which he or she may be entitled under the Uniform Residential Landlord and Tenant Act. However, a tenant shall not be liable for damages directly related to the tenant's removal from the premises by order of any governmental entity as a result of the premises not being fit for habitation due to the negligence or neglect of the landlord.

(5) The holder of the landlord's interest in the premises at the time of the termination of the tenancy is bound by this section.

Sec. 2. Section 76-1431, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

76-1431 (1) Except as provided in the Uniform Residential Landlord and Tenant Act, if there is a noncompliance with section 76-1421 materially affecting health and safety or a material noncompliance by the tenant with the rental agreement or any separate agreement, the landlord may deliver a written notice to the tenant specifying the acts and omissions constituting the breach and that the rental agreement will terminate upon a date not less than thirty days after receipt of the notice if the breach is not remedied in fourteen days, and the rental agreement shall terminate as provided in the notice subject to the following. If the breach is remediable by repairs or the payment of damages or otherwise and the tenant adequately remedies the breach prior to the date specified in the notice, the rental agreement will not terminate. If substantially the same act or omission which constituted a prior noncompliance of which notice was given recurs within six months, the landlord may terminate the rental agreement upon at least fourteen days' written notice specifying the breach and the date of termination of the rental agreement.

(2) If rent is unpaid when due and the tenant fails to pay rent within seven calendar ~~three~~ days after written notice by the landlord of nonpayment and his or her intention to terminate the rental agreement if the rent is not paid within that period of time, the landlord may terminate the rental agreement.

(3) Except as provided in the Uniform Residential Landlord and Tenant Act, the landlord may recover damages and obtain injunctive relief for any noncompliance by the tenant with the rental agreement or section 76-1421. If the tenant's noncompliance is willful, the landlord may recover reasonable attorney's fees.

(4) Notwithstanding subsections (1) and (2) of this section or section

25-21,221, a landlord may, after five days' written notice of termination of the rental agreement and without the right of the tenant to cure the default, file suit and have judgment against any tenant or occupant for recovery of possession of the premises if the tenant, occupant, member of the tenant's household, guest, or other person who is under the tenant's control or who is present upon the premises with the tenant's consent, engages in any violent criminal activity on the premises, the illegal sale of any controlled substance on the premises, or any other activity that threatens the health or safety of other tenants, the landlord, or the landlord's employees or agents. Such activity shall include, but not be limited to, any of the following activities of the tenant, occupant, member of the tenant's household, guest, or other person who is under the tenant's control or who is present upon the premises with the tenant's consent: (a) Physical assault or the threat of physical assault; (b) illegal use of a firearm or other weapon or the threat of illegal use of a firearm or other weapon; (c) possession of a controlled substance if the tenant knew or should have known of the possession, unless such controlled substance was obtained directly from or pursuant to a medical order issued by a practitioner legally authorized to prescribe while acting in the course of his or her professional practice; or (d) any other activity or threatened activity which would otherwise threaten the health or safety of any person or involving threatened, imminent, or actual damage to the property.

(5) Subsection (4) of this section does not apply to a tenant if the violent criminal activity, illegal sale of any controlled substance, or other activity that threatens the health or safety of other tenants, the landlord, or the landlord's employees or agents, as set forth in subsection (4) of this section, is conducted by a person on the premises other than the tenant and the tenant takes at least one of the following measures against the person engaging in such activity:

(a) The tenant seeks a protective order, restraining order, or other similar relief which would apply to the person conducting such activity; or

(b) The tenant reports such activity to a law enforcement agency in an effort to initiate a criminal action against the person conducting the activity.

Sec. 3. Original sections 76-1416 and 76-1431, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, are repealed.