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HISTORIC VICTORIES FOR HOMELESSNESS AND AFFORDABLE HOMES AS LEGISLATIVE SESSION ENDS

Lawmakers prioritize bold investments to turn around the statewide shortage of affordable homes.

SEATTLE, WA – Many thousands of Washingtonians will avoid homelessness and find safe, affordable homes across the state, thanks to the historic actions of legislators in Olympia this session. Lawmakers passed legislation that will invest in building thousands more affordable homes statewide, protect tenants from losing their homes, and control the costs to build new affordable homes.

Legislators made bold investments in affordable homes.

- Lawmakers allocated an unprecedented \$175 million to the Housing Trust Fund to build nearly 5,000 more permanently affordable homes across the state.
- Local communities have gained up to \$51 million per year to build affordable homes thanks to HB 1406.
- The Housing & Essential Needs rental assistance program received a \$14.5 million increase to prevent homelessness for 1,000 more temporarily disabled adults. This is the first-ever increase for Housing & Essential Needs, despite rents soaring statewide since its inception in 2011.

Two bills add up to the largest overhaul of the state's Residential Landlord-Tenant Act since its inception in the 1970's.

- A robust eviction reform bill, SB 5600, will allow tenants 14 days (instead of 3) to catch up on late rent before losing their homes, allow eviction court judges to use discretion and consider extenuating circumstances such as job loss or hospitalization, expand a mitigation fund to ensure landlords receive judgement payments promptly while giving tenants more time to pay, and limit the attorney fees tenants can be required to pay.
- More notice of rent increases (HB 1440) – Tenants will now have 60 days' notice of rent increases instead of just 30.

Lawmakers supported common-sense measures to control the cost of building affordable homes.

- Affordable housing and labor advocates found agreement on HB 1743 to control the cost of building affordable homes, while ensuring wage increases to the workers who build them.
- Removing barriers to building affordable homes (HB 1923) – Provides incentives to local jurisdictions to increase housing supply and reduce barriers like excessive parking requirements and impact fees.

“What struck me is the incredible leadership of so many lawmakers who stood up to advance bills and policies to prevent and end homelessness,” said Michele Thomas, the Housing

Alliance's director of policy and advocacy. "Also a stand-out is the large number of unusual partners who came to the table to negotiate in good faith on bills that will make significant progress on housing justice this year. We negotiated productively on a large variety of bills with labor, cities, counties, the building industry, private landlords, the realtor lobby and more. We had strong allies in every corner, including with environmental, racial justice and faith-based advocates. We led an effort that united many voices to turn around our state's affordable housing shortage."

"Washington is ranked 44th worst in the nation in terms of the availability of homes that are affordable for those struggling on the smallest incomes. That's just unacceptable, and the progress this session shows that lawmakers agree," said Rachael Myers, the Housing Alliance's executive director. "These bills and budget investments mean the difference between homelessness and a safe home for many thousands of Washingtonians."

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As the statewide champion for housing, the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance is a powerful coalition of diverse organizations and individuals working together to build and protect safe, healthy, affordable homes for everyone in Washington. Learn more at www.wliha.org.