

**First Regular Session
Seventy-Seventh General Assembly
STATE OF SAN ANDREAS**

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. 26-0704.01 Elizabeth Rivas x1915

HOUSE BILL 26-004

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Wells

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Black, Brewer

House Committees

Not assigned

Senate Committees

Not assigned

A BILL FOR AN ACT

**CONCERNING HOUSING STABILITY BY ESTABLISHING INCOME-BASED RENT
STANDARDS, CREATING FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS,
AND STANDARDIZING EVICTION PROCEDURES AND DEADLINES**

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as engrossed and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <https://saleg.uscgov.com>)

The Renters Protection Act establishes a comprehensive statewide framework intended to improve housing stability, promote affordability, and create uniform tenant protections while supporting pathways to homeownership. The General Assembly finds that rising housing costs and unpredictable rent increases contribute to displacement, homelessness,

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.
Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.

and financial insecurity, particularly for low-income households and individuals dependent on public benefits. The legislation seeks to balance tenant protections with predictable standards for property owners by linking rental costs, eviction procedures, and housing assistance programs to clear statutory guidelines.

A central provision of the bill creates a reasonable rent standard, limiting rent charged to eligible tenants to no more than thirty percent of household income, with additional protections for households experiencing unemployment or relying on disability or public assistance benefits. Rent adjustments may occur only following documented increases in tenant income or lease renewals lasting at least twelve months, and landlords must provide ninety days' written notice before any rent increase. The act also restricts repeated income verification requests and prohibits retaliatory rent increases, aiming to prevent sudden or arbitrary housing cost increases that undermine long-term tenancy.

In addition to rental protections, the bill establishes a First-Time Homebuyer Assistance Program administered by the Department of Local Affairs. The program provides financial support through down payment assistance, closing cost grants, and mortgage affordability tools such as interest rate reductions or tax credit certificates. Assistance prioritizes applicants earning at or below 120 percent of area median income and may be structured as forgivable loans contingent upon owner occupancy, encouraging long-term housing stability and expanding access to homeownership for renters facing structural market barriers.

The act further reforms eviction law by limiting permissible grounds for eviction, standardizing notice requirements, and establishing minimum procedural timelines designed to ensure due process. Tenants may be evicted only for specified causes such as nonpayment of lawful rent, material lease violations, criminal activity posing imminent threat, or legitimate owner occupancy or redevelopment. Courts must observe defined waiting periods before hearings, and tenants retain the right to present defenses or payment arrangements. Violations constitute unlawful housing practices subject to damages, injunctive relief, and attorney fees. The bill authorizes rulemaking by relevant state agencies and takes effect following the post-adjournalment period unless referred to voters through a veto petition process.

1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of San*
2 *Andreas:*
3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.** This act shall be known and cited
4 as the “Renters Protection Act”. **SECTION 2. LEGISLATIVE**
5 **DECLARATION.** The general assembly hereby finds and
6 declares that: (a) Access to stable, affordable housing is essential
7 to the health, safety, and economic security of individuals,
8 families, and communities throughout the state. (b) Housing costs
9 that exceed a reasonable portion of household income contribute
10 to housing instability, displacement, homelessness, and long-term
11 economic harm. (c) Rent increases untethered from tenant income
12 place disproportionate burdens on low-income households,
13 individuals receiving public benefits, and persons experiencing
14 temporary unemployment. (d) Homeownership remains a primary
15 avenue for long-term financial stability, yet first-time homebuyers
16 face systemic barriers including rising home prices, insufficient
17 down payment resources, and limited access to affordable credit.
18 (e) Eviction proceedings that lack clear timelines, notice
19 standards, and procedural protections undermine housing stability
20 and impose avoidable costs on tenants, landlords, courts, and local
21 governments. (f) It is the intent of the general assembly to create a
22 balanced housing framework that promotes affordability, supports
23 responsible homeownership, ensures predictability for property
24 owners, and establishes fair, uniform eviction procedures
25 consistent with due process. **SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS.** As
26 used in this article, unless the context otherwise requires: (a)
“Area median income” or “AMI” means the median household
income for the applicable geographic area, as published annually
by the United States Department of Housing and Urban
Development. (b) “Eligible tenant” means an individual or
household that occupies a residential dwelling as a primary

1 residence. (c) “First-time homebuyer” means an individual who
2 has not owned or held an ownership interest in a residential
3 dwelling within the previous three years. (d) “Household income”
4 means the total gross income of all adult members of a household
5 from all sources, including wages, salaries, public assistance
6 benefits, disability benefits, unemployment compensation, and
7 other lawful income. (e) “Reasonable rent” means a rental amount
8 that does not exceed the maximum percentage of household
9 income established in section 402 of this article. (f) “Residential
10 dwelling” means a structure or portion thereof used or intended
11 for human habitation, including apartments, condominiums, and
12 single-family rental homes. **SECTION 4. REASONABLE RENT**
13 **REQUIREMENTS.** (a) A landlord shall not charge or collect rent
14 from an eligible tenant in an amount that exceeds thirty percent of
15 the tenant’s household income on a monthly basis. (b) For tenants
16 whose household income is derived in whole or in part from
17 public assistance or disability benefits, rent shall be calculated
18 based on the verified benefit amount. (c) Rent shall be capped at
19 twenty percent of household income, if any income is present; or
20 (d) If the tenant has no current income, rent shall be deferred or
21 reduced to a minimum amount established by rule until
22 employment or benefits resume. (e) A landlord may require
23 income verification no more than once annually unless the tenant
24 voluntarily reports a material change in income. **SECTION 5.**
25 **RENT ADJUSTMENTS AND PROTECTIONS.** (a) Rent may be
26 adjusted only upon: (I) A documented increase in tenant
27 household income; or (II) Renewal of a lease term of not less than
28 twelve months. (b) A landlord shall provide at least ninety days’
29 written notice prior to any rent increase. (c) Retaliatory rent
30 increases are prohibited. **SECTION 6. FIRST-TIME**
31 **HOMEBUYER GRANTS AND DISCOUNTS.** (a) The
32 Department of Local Affairs shall establish a First-Time
33 Homebuyer Assistance Program. (b) The program shall provide:

1 (I) Down payment assistance grants; (II) Closing cost assistance;
2 and (III) Interest rate reductions or mortgage credit certificates.
3 (c) Assistance shall be prioritized for applicants earning at or
4 below one hundred twenty percent of AMI. **SECTION 7.**
5 **ELIGIBILITY AND CONDITIONS.** (a) An applicant must: (I)
6 Be a first-time homebuyer; (II) Occupy the purchased dwelling as
7 a primary residence; and (III) Complete a housing counseling
8 program approved by the department. (b) Assistance may be
9 structured as a forgivable loan contingent upon owner occupancy
10 for a minimum of five years. **SECTION 8. GROUNDS FOR**
11 **EVICTION.** (a) A tenant may be evicted only for: (I)
12 Nonpayment of rent lawfully owed; (II) Material lease violations;
13 (III) Criminal activity posing an imminent threat; or (IV) Owner
14 occupancy or lawful redevelopment. **SECTION 9. NOTICE**
15 **REQUIREMENTS.** (a) A landlord shall provide: (I) A
16 fourteen-day notice for nonpayment of rent; (II) A thirty-day
17 notice for lease violations capable of cure; and (III) A ninety-day
18 notice for no-fault evictions. **SECTION 10. EVICTION**
19 **TIMELINES AND PROCEDURES.** (a) Eviction filings shall not
20 occur until the applicable notice period expires. (b) Courts shall
21 schedule eviction hearings no sooner than fourteen days after
22 filing. (c) Tenants shall have the right to present defenses,
23 payment plans, or proof of compliance. **SECTION 11.**
24 **ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES.** (a) A violation of this
25 article constitutes an unlawful housing practice. (b) Remedies
26 include: (I) Actual damages; (II) Statutory damages; (III)
27 Injunctive relief; and (IV) Attorney fees. **SECTION 12.**
28 **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY.** The Department of Local Affairs,
29 in coordination with the Department of Human Services and the
30 Judicial Branch, may promulgate rules to implement this article.
31 **SECTION 13. EFFECTIVE DATE.** Act subject to petition -
32 effective date. This act takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day
33 following the expiration of the ninety-day period after final

1 adjournment of the general assembly; except that, if a veto
2 petition is filed pursuant to Article II, Section 15 of the state
3 constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this act
4 within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take
5 effect unless approved by the people at the general election to be
6 held in November 2027 and, in such case, will take effect on the
7 date of the official declaration of the vote thereon by the
8 governor..