



Proposed Amendment to H.772 – Notice and Documentation for Victim-Tenants
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Thank you for the opportunity to share a proposed amendment to H.772 to clarify protections for survivors of domestic abuse, sexual assault, and stalking and to support their continued access to housing.

In 2025, the 14 member programs of the Vermont Network provided emergency shelter to 1,041 individuals fleeing violence. Collectively, these programs serve every town in Vermont, supporting survivors through emergency shelter, motel overflow, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, and assistance accessing the General Assistance Emergency Housing Program.

Language in H.772 – specifically § 4465 Retaliatory Conduct Prohibited; § 4467 Termination of Tenancy; Notice; and § 4472a Right to Bifurcation of a Rental Agreement – seeks to ensure that tenants can report incidents of violence or request assistance without increasing their risk of losing housing and affirms that a tenant's housing status should not be adversely affected solely because they are the target of violence.

To ensure these protections are implemented as intended, we propose an amendment to clarify and improve their operationalization. The proposed amendment would:

- Establish a notice of tenant rights to be provided by the landlord, including at the time of an eviction notice;
- Clarify the process for lease bifurcation; and
- Adjust language, including remove § 4467 (b)(5)(C), to better align with existing state and federal housing protections for survivors and minimize any unintended consequences for survivors.

These updates draw from stakeholder feedback, as well as existing standards in the federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and current state law protections in 9 V.S.A. § 4472.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.



Proposed Amendment to H.772

SUBCHAPTER 2: RESIDENTIAL RENTAL AGREEMENTS

... (X) NOTIFICATION OF OCCUPANCY RIGHTS

(1) The Housing Division of the Agency of Commerce and Community Development shall develop a Notice of Occupancy Rights under Vermont and federal law, including information related to the right to confidentiality pursuant to 9 V.S.A. § 4474.

(2) The notice shall comply with the Office of Racial Equity's most recent Language Access Report.

(3) A landlord shall provide the notice developed under subsection (1) to an applicant or tenant:

(A) at the time the individual is admitted to a dwelling unit;

(B) at the time the applicant is denied residency in a dwelling unit; or

(C) with any notification of eviction or notification of termination.

§ 4467 TERMINATION OF TENANCY; NOTICE

...

~~(b)(5)(B) The landlord shall allow a A protected tenant who is the victim of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking committed by another tenant or lawful occupant may request to bifurcate the rental agreement as authorized in section 4472a of this title.~~

~~(b)(5)(C) The landlord may terminate the rental agreement under subdivision (2) of this subsection (b) for a tenant who has committed an act of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking against another tenant if the act poses an actual and imminent threat to the remaining tenants, other residents, the landlord or landlord's agent, or neighbors, and there is no other action to be taken that would reduce or eliminate the threat.~~

§ 4472a RIGHT TO BIFURCATION OF A RENTAL AGREEMENT

(a)(1) Notwithstanding a contrary provision of a rental agreement or of subchapter 2 of this chapter, a landlord ~~shall~~ may authorize a protected tenant's written request to bifurcate a rental agreement in order to eject, remove, or terminate a rental agreement to any individual who is a tenant or lawful occupant of the dwelling unit that engages in abuse, sexual assault, or stalking, against the protected tenant without ejecting, removing, or terminating the rental agreement with the protected tenant.

(a)(2) If the protected tenant includes with their written request a copy of a court order that requires the perpetrator to leave the premises, a landlord shall bifurcate a rental agreement in order to eject, remove, or terminate a rental agreement to any individual who is a tenant or lawful occupant of the dwelling unit that engages in abuse, sexual assault, or stalking against the protected tenant without ejecting, removing, or terminating the rental agreement with the protected tenant.

(a)(3) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to require a landlord to request that a protected tenant submit documentation of the status of the protected tenant as a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.



Appendix: Existing Housing Protections for Survivors of Domestic Abuse, Sexual Assault and Stalking

Federal Tenant Protections for Survivors

The federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) protects federally subsidized tenants from being denied housing or from being evicted because they are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. A federally subsidized tenant includes someone who lives in public housing, has a Section 8 voucher, or lives in a rental unit that receives federal housing assistance.

Should the abusive partner and survivor both be listed on the lease, a landlord can evict only the abusive partner allowing the survivor to stay housed. If only the abusive partner is listed on the lease, the public housing authority or landlord must provide the remaining tenant an opportunity to establish eligibility, or a reasonable time to move.

Federal Housing Programs with VAWA Protections

- Public Housing
- Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers
- Project-based Section 8
- Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly
- Section 811 Supportive Housing for People with Disabilities
- § 236 Multifamily Rental Housing
- § 221(d)(3) Below Market Interest Rate
- HOME
- Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS
- Rural Development Multifamily programs
- Low Income Housing Tax Credit
- National Housing Trust Fund
- Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG)

State Tenant Protections for Survivors

On July 1, 2019, Act 48 enacted a series of tenant protections for survivors. This law, unlike the federal law, applies to all Vermont rental housing. The law protects survivors from being discriminated against in housing due to their victim status, allows a tenant to request that they be released from their lease early, without penalty, and allows survivors to change locks within 48 hours. The law also requires the owner, landlord, or housing subsidy provider who possesses documentation or information concerning a protected tenant's status as a victim to keep the document or information confidential and shall not allow or provide access to another person with few exceptions in 9 V.S.A. §4474.