
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 121 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY CIRESI, HOHENSTEIN, SCOTT, SCHLOSSBERG, KINSEY,
HARKINS, HILL-EVANS, SANCHEZ, MADDEN, GUENST, NEILSON,
BURGOS, D. WILLIAMS, KRAJEWSKI, SHUSTERMAN, FREEMAN, OTTEN,
CERRATO AND O'MARA, MARCH 7, 2023

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,
MARCH 7, 2023

AN ACT

1 Providing for off-campus student housing rights.

2 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

3 hereby enacts as follows:

4 Section 1. Short title.

5 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Off-Campus
6 Student Housing Tenant Rights Act.

7 Section 2. Definitions.

8 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
9 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
10 context clearly indicates otherwise:

11 "Bill of rights." The student bill of rights provided for
12 under section 3.

13 "Department." The Department of Education of the
14 Commonwealth.

15 "Institution of higher education." A public or private two-
16 year or four-year or postsecondary institution of higher

1 education in this Commonwealth that has been accredited at the
2 college level by an accrediting agency recognized by the United
3 States Secretary of Education.

4 Section 3. Student bill of rights.

5 (a) General rule.--The department shall create and
6 distribute a bill of rights to institutions of higher education
7 in this Commonwealth. The bill of rights shall include
8 information about renting, including harassment and
9 discrimination, and include the following rights:

10 (1) To live in a habitable dwelling.

11 (2) To residential privacy.

12 (3) To a hearing prior to eviction.

13 (4) To receive a writ of possession prior to eviction.

14 (5) For an individual with disabilities to request
15 reasonable accommodations.

16 (6) To visitors.

17 (7) To utility access.

18 (b) Notice.--An institution of higher education shall
19 distribute a bill of rights to each student who is enrolled at
20 the institution of higher education, and each newly enrolled
21 student thereafter. The institution of higher education shall
22 provide to each student enrolled, along with the bill of rights,
23 a list of the most recent contact information for the municipal
24 code enforcement office where the institution of higher
25 education is located and for all municipal code enforcement
26 offices in adjacent municipalities.

27 Section 4. Off-campus student certification course.

28 (a) Course creation.--The department shall create an online
29 course to educate new students of their rights as tenants.

30 (b) Course requirements.--The following criteria shall apply

1 to the online course under subsection (a):

2 (1) The online course shall be one instructional session
3 which can be viewed via a secure Internet website.

4 (2) The online course shall provide:

5 (i) Tenant rights provided under Federal, State or
6 local law, ordinance or court precedent.

7 (ii) The actions students may take when experiencing
8 unsafe housing.

9 (iii) Other relevant information the department
10 deems appropriate for inclusion in the online course.

11 (3) All students of the institution of higher education
12 enrolled after the effective date of this section shall be
13 required to view the online course. Documentation of the
14 successful completion of the online course by each student
15 shall be maintained by the institution of higher education.
16 An institution of higher education may charge a fee of not
17 more than \$50 to a student who fails to view the online
18 course under this section by the end of the student's first
19 semester.

20 (4) An institution of higher education may create and
21 administer the institution's own off-campus student
22 certification online course. Written notification and all
23 electronic files, documents and a completed copy of the
24 online course must be provided to the department.

25 Section 5. Effective date.

26 This act shall take effect January 1, 2024, or immediately,
27 whichever is later.