

## **SUPPORT EARLY LEASE TERMINATION for victims of domestic & sexual violence**

The Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV) enthusiastically supports [HF 2134](#) (formerly [HSB 141](#)) allowing victims of domestic abuse, sexual abuse, stalking and elder abuse to terminate a lease early if they provide landlords, written notice, and documentation of harm.

This bill reduces a major economic barrier to seeking safety, enables victims to remain in good standing with landlords and avoid an eviction record, which in turn gives survivors a better chance at escaping violence and economic hardship in the future. Currently, forty states have adopted this sensible policy, including every state bordering Iowa. **[This bill passed the House 94-0 in 2023]**

ICADV represents 25 crime victim service provider organization across Iowa serving victims of violent crime including domestic and sexual violence and human trafficking. Assistance accessing safe and stable housing is the most frequently requested service by crime victims seeking support from these providers and unfortunately, remains one of the greatest unmet needs for victims we serve. In the latest annual point-in-time survey counting the services provided and the unmet need in [Iowa](#) on a single day – 62% of services provided to victims that day involved housing assistance and unfortunately- among requests for services that agencies could not provide on that day due to various obstacles- 93% involved requests for housing support. *[\*survey is of ICADV member organizations- these agencies support most of the [victims served](#) by providers receiving public funds administered by the Iowa AG.]*

Escaping abuse generally means losing housing and economic security as well as the means to regain it. And because leaving a violent home is the most dangerous time for most survivors, the economic reality of escaping violence heavily impacts decisions about seeking safety. Without early lease termination, the options are not good.

Survivors of violent crime are acutely aware that having an eviction record severely limits access to housing and creates a cascade of negative consequences that undermine economic security by limiting access to safety, jobs, schools, etc. And for service providers or anyone supporting a survivor- an eviction record makes it a lot harder to help them find housing.

Many victims remain trapped in dangerous relationships because they cannot afford to leave, i.e., they cannot afford to pay out the remainder of a lease so they stay because they cannot afford having an eviction record -- and being homeless, especially with children, is riskier than staying. Alternatively, many victims who do leave are frequently evicted for nonpayment of rent because staying was riskier than leaving but they were unable to continue paying out the remainder of a lease.

This bill creates a sensible way to respect the needs of landlords and tenants. For landlords the bill provides certainty about what they can expect in terms of collecting rent and certainty about when tenants leave so they can efficiently list available property. Many landlords go out of their way to help a tenant experiencing violence- in providing certainty in these situations- it also helps avoid a potentially dangerous outcome.

For violent crime victims the bill reduces a major economic barrier to seeking safety. Again, it is difficult to obtain stable housing when you have an eviction record. Enabling survivors to terminate a lease early and avoid eviction at this critical point is key and can mean the difference between a lifetime of economic hardship and a future free from violence. The very least we can do for victims of domestic and sexual violence is to enable a smoother path toward finding safe, stable housing. Please support this bill.

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# EARLY LEASE TERMINATION – Bill Summary & History

## Summary

Allows a tenant to terminate a lease early without penalty or liability if they provide written notice and documentation to the landlord that tenant or household member is a victim of violent crime, e.g. domestic abuse, sexual abuse, stalking, elder abuse.

Written notice must include specified date for intention to terminate the lease which is no sooner than 14 days and no later than 30 days from the notification, and the names of any household members also to be released. Tenants must attach a copy of one of the following documents to the written notice: protection or no contact order, peace officer report; documentation from a qualified third party, e.g. health care professional, mental health professional, or victim counselor.

The tenant must pay current month rent and any pro-rated days of rent through the date of termination stated in notice. Tenants are not liable for rent or damages after the lease termination date and cannot be subject to fees or discrimination based solely on terminating a lease early under this provision.

## Bill History

### 89<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2021-2022)

#### **2022: HF 2479 approved by House Public Safety committee**

HSB 707/HF 2479: introduced in Public Safety; subc 3-0; passed full committee

- [Bill History](#) – links to bill text; HSB 707 [declarations](#); HF 2479 [declarations](#)
- Notes: Klein introduced; Subc approved 3-0 (Andrews, Westrich, Ako); approved by full committee, never considered by full House.

### 90<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2023-2024)

#### **2023: House passed HF 547 (94-0); no Senate action HF 547; Senate Judc Subc approved SF 140**

HSB2/HF 547: introduced in Judiciary (Jan); amended/passed House 94-0 (March); no Senate action

- [Bill History](#) – links to bill text; HSB 2 [declarations](#); HF 547 [declarations](#)
- Notes: Holt introduced; House subc approved 3-0 (Kaufmann, Stone, BWK); House passed in March; HF 547 assigned Senate subc (Webster, DeWitt, Quirmbach) did not meet but Senate subc (Bousselot, Knox, Rowley) approved companion bill (SF 140) in February.

SF 140: introduced in Judiciary (Jan); subc approved (Feb); did not advance further

- [Bill History](#) – links to bill text; SF 140 [declarations](#)
- Notes: Cournoyer introduced, assigned to Judiciary, Subc approved Feb (Bousselot, Knox, Rowley), died in first funnel, but HF 547 sent over to Senate but not considered

#### **2024: Senate Judiciary did not consider HF 547**

### 91<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2025-2026)

#### **2025: House Judiciary committee approved HSB 141 (21-0); no Senate bill introduced**

HSB 141: introduced Judiciary (Feb); subc approved (Feb 13), full committee approved (21-0, Mar)

- [HSB 141](#) text, history; [declarations](#)
- Notes: Holt introduced; subc approved (Stone, Lohse, Wessel-Kroeschell); full comm (21-0)

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# EARLY LEASE TERMINATION – State Laws (Feb 2025)

## 40 states (+ WDC) have early lease termination Laws

10 States do not: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, **IOWA**, Montana, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, S. Carolina, Tennessee, West Virginia

## All Iowa border states have Early Lease Termination Laws

\*Crime type abbreviations: DV=domestic violence or abuse; SA=sexual assault or abuse; STKG=stalking; HT=human trafficking

\*Documentation abbreviations: Court=civil or criminal court orders; LE=report, arrest, evidence, record; VS=victim service provider; HC=medical provider

STATE	STATUTE	CRIMES	DOCUMENTATION	Notes
<b>Illinois</b>	<a href="#">statute</a> 765 ILCS 750 <a href="#">Explanation</a>	DV, SA, STKG	Court, LE, VS, HC	
<b>Kansas</b>	<a href="#">Statute</a> 58-25, 137	DV, SA, STKG, HT	Court, licensed professional	Not a border state; included in response to request for information
<b>Minnesota</b>	<a href="#">Statute</a> 504B.206 <a href="#">Explanation</a>	DV, SA, STKG	Court, LE, HC, VS, 3 <sup>rd</sup> party	
<b>Missouri</b>	<a href="#">Statute</a> MO ST 441.920 <a href="#">Explanation</a>	DV, SA, STKG	Court, LE, VS, HC, 3 <sup>rd</sup> party	
<b>Nebraska</b>	<a href="#">Statute</a> NE RS 76- 1431.01 <a href="#">Explanation</a>	DV, SA, STKG, HT, Elder abuse	Court, VS, 3 <sup>rd</sup> party	<a href="#">backgrounder</a> statute defines DV to include DV, SA, Stkg, HT, elder abuse
<b>S. Dakota</b>	<a href="#">statute</a> SDCL 43-32- 18.1 SDCL 43-32- 19.1 <a href="#">Explanation</a>	DV, SA, Stalking	Court, LE, HC	
<b>Wisconsin</b>	<a href="#">Statute</a> 704.16 <a href="#">Explanation</a>	DV, SA, Stalking	Court, LE	

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