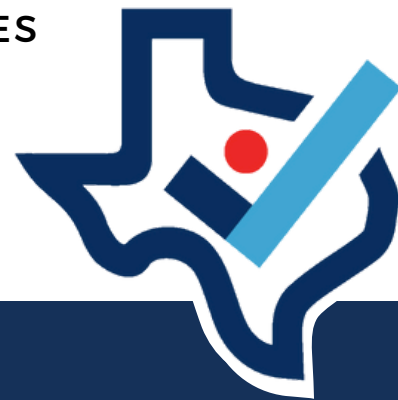


House Bill (HB) 1063

Rep. Salman Bhojani



Tenant Legal Services for Renters with Disabilities

HB 1063 would amend the local government code to allow local governments to establish tenant legal service offices. These offices would assist low-income residential tenants in cases of eviction and disability-based discrimination. The local government could establish a department to offer the services, or contract with a nonprofit corporation to serve as the tenant legal services office. The bill would allow any combination of municipalities or counties to enter into a contract to implement or administer the office together.



Federal and state laws such as the Fair Housing Act prohibit housing discrimination based on a person's disability, but violations are largely underreported. Reports show that tenants with disabilities often experience higher rates of eviction and housing denial, as well as refusal to allow modifications to accommodate their needs.



Only 4% of tenants facing eviction are represented by lawyers compared to 83% of landlords, as seen in data shared by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This significant legal disparity contributes to a growing risk of displacement for low-income individuals, including older adults and people with disabilities.



In 2023, similar legislation was supported by ADAPT of Texas, City of Fort Worth, City of San Antonio, Conference of Urban Counties, Disability Rights Texas, Institute for Disability Access, Personal Attendant Coalition of Texas, Texas Homeless Network, Travis County Commissioners Court, Vivent Health, and others.



"HB 1063 is a crucial step towards ensuring justice and fairness in our housing system. Without access to tenant legal services, disabled and low-income tenants are routinely taken advantage of in ways that lead to increased homelessness and cyclical housing instability."

Rep. Salman Bhojani, author of HB 1063