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House Passes Housing Data Base Bill

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[Bob Kinzel](#) - Montpelier, VT

(Host) After nearly four hours of debate, and numerous roll call votes, the House has given its approval to a bill that creates a statewide data base for all rental units in Vermont and it establishes minimum safety standards for these units.

The vote on the bill was 88 to 51.

South Burlington Representative Helen Head is the chairwoman of the House General, Housing and Military Affairs committee. She says it's critical to identify all rental units in the state:

(Head) "Only properties with five or more units are specifically noted as rental property. Approximately 40 percent of state rental stock is between 2 and 4 units. Many municipalities already track and record this information, although we did hear from some listers that they felt this would constitute an additional burden."

(Host) Lowell Representative Mark Higley has been a lister for 16 years. He thinks the legislation will place many local listers in a very difficult position:

(Higley) "If I'm looked at going down the road trying to pick up these rental places - whether it's a mother in law rental or just a mother in law apartment, which could be a rental at some point - I'm not going to be welcomed with open arms I can tell you that."

(Host) But Newfane Representative Richard Marek urged his colleagues not to lose sight of the importance of setting minimum safety standards for all rental units:

(Marek) "That's the purpose of the bill. And every time we put a provision in law that tries to serve that purpose we seem to hear objections that it might somehow inconvenience someone or make their life more difficult. I would suggest that life is very difficult when one lives in substandard ill maintained housing. That's the purpose of this bill - it's a good purpose and we ought to adopt this provision."

(Host) The legislation will come up for final approval in the House on Friday.