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Thompson Rivers University Students' Union
Local 15 Canadian Federation of Students

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BC Rental Housing Task Force
Spencer Chandra Herbert, Chair
Parliament Buildings, Victoria, BC V8V1X4

July 3, 2018

Extending Tenants' Protections To Students Living In Residences

Dear Members of the BC Rental Housing Task Force,

On behalf of the Thompson Rivers University Students' Union we are urging you to advise the government to amend the *Residential Tenancy Act* and eliminate the exemption from the *Act* for "living accommodation owned or operated by an educational institution and provided by that institution to its students or employees."

Living in accommodation provided by a post-secondary institution is usually a very positive experience for thousands of students across BC. Being amongst your peers promotes a vibrant, diverse environment that fosters connections between students and allows institutions to provide targeted support services and other resources. Residences at colleges, universities, and institutes provide an important function and housing option for students, particularly during the ongoing affordable housing crunch we are seeing across BC.

However, conflicts can and do arise between students and the post-secondary institutions and/or the private housing corporations they sub-contract to. These disputes are challenging to navigate because of the structural disadvantage that individual students experience when dealing with these large and well-resourced institutions. Students are often younger, experience economic precarity, are International students who are unfamiliar with the BC housing market, are Indigenous students who experience racist barriers to accessing housing in the community, and have other identities that marginalize them and prevent them from dealing with housing disputes on a level playing field. We believe that Government must address these challenges and legislate to balance the rights and responsibilities of tenants and housing providers.

Students living in residences are not currently protected by the *Act*, which means there isn't a minimum standard for security deposits, rental increases, evictions, entry into the rental unit, repairs and maintenance, etc. Unfortunately, this means that post-secondary housing providers may have business practices and behaviour that would otherwise be illegal if they were providing housing to non-students. Considering the profit motive for these housing providers, it is concerning that there is no regulatory framework to prevent unscrupulous behaviour like



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rapid no-fault evictions, keeping tenant's deposits, failing to provide heat/water/electricity by not repairing or maintaining properties, entering tenant's units without permission or notice, and other ways in which housing providers can take advantage of tenants.

We believe that students should have the same protections and responsibilities under the law and that applying the *Residential Tenancy Act* to accommodation provided by post-secondary institutions is critical to achieve that balance.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this consultation process and for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tatiana Gilbert", written over a horizontal line.

Tatiana Gilbert
President
TRU Students' Union

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sierra Rae", written over a horizontal line.

Sierra Rae
Vice-President Equity
TRU Students' Union

cc: Ronna-Rae Leonard, Adam Olsen

About the TRU Students' Union

The Thompson Rivers University Students' Union is the membership organization of more than 10,000 students studying at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops.



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