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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE RESIDENTIAL LANDLORD-TENANT CODE.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that prohibiting a  
2 landlord from restricting a tenant's ability to keep pet animals  
3 in a dwelling unit, contingent upon the tenant obtaining and  
4 maintaining liability insurance, offers numerous benefits. Pets  
5 contribute significantly to the emotional and mental health of  
6 individuals, as evidenced during the COVID-19 pandemic when  
7 sixty-two per cent of pet owners reported improved mental health  
8 due to their pets and eighty-four per cent noted strengthened  
9 emotional bonds. Allowing pets in rental properties can also  
10 promote housing stability, as pet owners often face challenges  
11 in finding suitable housing and tend to stay longer in pet-  
12 friendly accommodations. This stability benefits both tenants  
13 and landlords by reducing turnover rates. Additionally,  
14 permitting pets in dwelling units broadens the pool of potential  
15 tenants for landlords, as a large portion of households own  
16 pets, and landlords can often command higher rents or charge  
17 pet-related fees, increasing rental income. Furthermore,



1 reducing restrictions on pet ownership can help mitigate the  
2 number of animals surrendered to overcrowded shelters,  
3 addressing a significant animal welfare issue.

4 The legislature further finds that other jurisdictions have  
5 explored similar measures. In California, recent legislation  
6 aimed to prohibit landlords from instituting blanket bans on  
7 common household pets in rental units, while also limiting  
8 additional pet-related fees. Similarly, New South Wales,  
9 Australia, has enacted reforms making it easier for tenants to  
10 keep pets in rental properties, requiring landlords to provide  
11 valid reasons for denying pet requests.

12 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to enhance tenant  
13 well-being, housing stability, and animal welfare by restricting  
14 landlords from prohibiting pet animals in dwelling units, while  
15 ensuring landlords are protected through the requirement of  
16 tenant-obtained liability insurance to cover potential damages  
17 caused by pet animals.

18 SECTION 2. Chapter 521, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
19 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated  
20 and to read as follows:



1           "§521-    Pet animals; restrictions prohibited; proof of  
2 insurance.   (a) No rental agreement shall prohibit a tenant  
3 from keeping a pet animal in the dwelling unit; provided that  
4 the tenant obtains and maintains liability insurance to cover  
5 personal or property damages caused by the pet animal; provided  
6 further that this section shall not apply where the articles of  
7 incorporation, declaration, bylaws, administrative rules, house  
8 rules, association documents, or a similar document of a  
9 condominium property regime or planned community association  
10 prohibits the presence of pet animals in the dwelling unit.

11           (b) For the purposes of this section, "pet animal" has the  
12 same meaning as defined in section 711-1100."

13           SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

14           SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY: 



# S.B. NO. 416

**Report Title:**

Residential Landlord-Tenant Code; Pet Animals; Restrictions Prohibited; Liability Insurance Coverage

**Description:**

Prohibits rental agreements from prohibiting tenants from keeping pet animals in dwelling units, subject to certain conditions.

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

