



# The Student Senate

Of the Associated Students of Western Washington University

Viking Union 527 ■ Bellingham, WA 98225 ■ (360)-650-6455

## A Resolution in Support of Safety in Rental Housing

**Whereas** there have been breaches in the safety of rental properties in the city of Bellingham.

**Whereas** there have been fires that are preventable and through no fault of the tenant, both through the lack of enforcement against illegal wiring and the lack of a "shut-down" switch which could have prevented fires, in addition to a lack of adequate fire escapes which, in some instances, violate legal requirements.

**Whereas** there continues to be numerous instances of mold infestations in units throughout the city which present the ability to be in contact with several known health risks including, but not limited to: sneezing, runny nose, coughing, wheezing, tearing, skin rashes, asthma attacks, fever, and difficulty breathing.

**Whereas** there have been units throughout Bellingham that have severe structural concerns that are the cause of, or exacerbate, many of the issues throughout this document, creating an unhealthy environment for the residents who live in these units and

**Whereas** we support the specifics of mandatory inspections because tenants, on the whole, do not have the requisite knowledge of the issues already mentioned to force the landlord to bring the unit into compliance with law and

**Whereas** dilapidation of rental properties diminishes the value of homes and other properties in the area, and the aesthetic value of the community and

**Whereas** renting is a consumer issue, and landlords, as service providers, should be regulated in the same way that that the city of Bellingham regulates every business that provides services to consumers.

**Be it resolved** that the ASWWU supports a mandatory inspection program by the city of Bellingham which would ensure the safety and wellness of rental residents, including students.

**Be it resolved** that the ASWWU supports a form of rental safety inspections which mandates the period between inspections to be no more than three years per unit, in order to prudently ensure that rental regulations are being followed.

**Be it resolved** that the ASWWU recognizes that the health and safety of its students are paramount in order to enjoy a good quality-of-life and achieve educational excellence and these stated aims will not be achieved unless rental units are subject to the care of trained professionals who can ascertain unsafe living conditions.