**Landlord-Tenant Reform in Bellingham**

* **Washington State Law Title 59 RCW** establishes the rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords in Bellingham.
* Some landlords in Bellingham violate their duties and endanger their tenants.
* Bellingham need new city ordinances passed to ensure that the law is enforced.
* Student renters are harmed:
  + **Physically** – Students live in homes that are violating of health and safety laws. Negligent landlord oversight of properties results in serious injury and suffering by student tenants.
  + **Financially** – Violations of Washington State Tenant Laws regarding rent and security deposits inappropriately places undue expenses on students.
  + **Psychologically** – Living in dangerous housing and dealing with negligent landlords harm students’ wellbeing and impacts their transitions after WWU.
* Currently, many students do not know their rights, how to identify housing or safety violations, or who to contact for support.
* The current complaint-based system puts gratuitous pressure on the tenants to protect their rights and shifts the responsibility away from where it belongs: *on the landlord*.
* Our solution is to implement new policies to:
  + Require landlords to **register all their properties** with the Bellingham City Permit Center. Registrations to be kept on record and available to public.
  + Require rental properties to be **inspected by a professional** to check for health or safety hazards. Also respond to tenant requests.
  + Establish new **educational resources** for landlords and tenants to understand responsibilities and protections in the law.
  + Support **greater communication** between landlords, tenants, students, WWU, neighborhood associations, non-profits, and the city of Bellingham.
* The outcomes:
  + Better health and safety of renters in the community.
  + Improved relations between tenants and landlords.
  + Improve neighborhood safety and community in Bellingham.