



Legislative Affairs Council

Choosing an Issue

Issue: Eliminating Tenant Waste on Bellingham Streets

Author(s)/Sponsor(s): McKenzie Dent

Endorsements: _____

Proposed Action Agenda Item Title: Tenant Waste

1) Describe the Issue (what is the problem & what is the solution).

There has been a large amount of waste left by tenants in the streets and sidewalks of Bellingham, and the source of the problem may not be tenant apathy. To see a decline in tenant waste, Bellingham needs to hold property owners and tenants responsible for education and access. First, in multi-family units, landlords should be required to provide an adequate number of garbage and recycling containers with respect to the number of tenants occupying the facility. Second, the University and other affiliated community groups should provide education to tenants regarding how and where to dispose of unwanted items (including zero/low-cost options such as rummage sales, charities accepting donations, etc). Finally, landlords should be held responsible to ensure that units are entirely cleaned out of prior garbage and furniture (unless a previous arrangement has been made) before handing over the keys to new tenants. With simple steps of education and accountability, the streets and sidewalks of Bellingham will see drastic improvements.

2) Please fill out a Strategy Chart.

3) Please explain briefly how/if this issue meets the following qualifications:

1. Is it winnable?

Yes, the city is already actively pursuing methods to decrease tenant waste.

2. Does it directly impact and improve students' lives?

It directly impacts students, who are extremely susceptible to poor living conditions and predatory landlords who will not provide adequate living standards, such as a clean space to move in to and adequate garbage and recycling facilities.

3. Does it have a clear target?

There are several targets: the city council, the planning director, and other involved parties at the University level.

4. Does it build a measurable amount of power?

Tenant waste is something that affects a large amount of students, and as the city becomes more serious about eliminating the problem, students may be a target of repercussions and enforcement.

5. Does it have a clear and realistic time frame?

This is something that would be easy to see passed in this school year, since the city has already taken significant steps to improving the situation.

6. Does it have a local/state/federal organizing and lobbying angle?

Local lobbying angle.



Legislative Affairs Council

Choosing an Issue

7. Could students build a diverse campus coalition around this issue?

Yes, most students living off campus are affected by tenant waste, either in the form of experiencing it on their street corners, or having old tenant's furniture and belonging left un-cleaned when they move into their new unit.

8. Is it likely to be debated and acted upon by the Legislature in the next year?

9. Will it strengthen and expand efforts within the ASWWU?

It will help ensure tenant rights and education are accounted for by landlords and the city.

10. Can you provide background information and the current context of the issue?

The Tenant Waste Taskforce has currently been meeting to explore the action steps to eliminating tenant waste. These suggestions have come directly from actions evaluated and supported in those meetings, and other additional suggestions are still underway. (I also have survey results from two WWU students that researched the tenant waste problem)

11. What creative and/or innovative tactics could we employ to engage the media and excite new students around this issue?

Creating new ways to help tenants dispose of unneeded furniture/other items, organizing a mmmage sale on campus