

My name is Liza Andrew and I started the Facebook group, Legislative Action For Renters North Dakota which quickly rose to over a thousand members in a month. I support HB 1272.

When I was 19 years old I moved out of my family home for the first time and joined the 37 percent of North Dakotans who are renters. Due to the economy in North Dakota and the nation as a whole a lot of us remain renters for long periods of time.

I was just starting out in life so I needed something affordable. I found Valley Rental and moved into one of their apartments in Bismarck in May of 2021. I stayed for a total of two 1 year leases and moved out in June of 2023. I paid a total of 900 dollars in deposits between the move in and a pet deposit.

When I signed the notice to not renew my lease things changed drastically. I had everything moved out of my apartment and the unit cleaned by a professional cleaning service for 10 hours on June 28th 2023. By the time I had finished it was late so I took my pictures and waited to contact Valley Rental until the next day. My now husband and I went back to Minot to rest for the night but I was completely prepared to come back at anytime for the final walk-through. The next day I called multiple times and even tried the "new renters" option on the Fargo number and asked to be transferred to Valley Rental in Bismarck. They still didnt answer. So I sent an email to which there was no reply. My mom also tried numerous times to contact Valley Rental by showing up at the office but the door was always locked until they finally unlocked the door on the 30th when another tenant told my mom that a manager was inside. When my mom asked about a final walk-through, she was told it was too late, and that I would receive my final bill in 30 days.

More than 60 days later I received a notice in my email that I owe \$6,000 dollars in damages minus my \$900 deposit. To say I was shocked would be an understatement. I emailed Valley Rental asking for an itemized report and was directed to my online portal. The portal stated most of the charges were for Flooring Replacement for the amount of \$4200. I emailed Valley Rental asking for explanations and receipts from the repair companies and did not receive a reply until I mentioned I was speaking with an attorney. They had replaced the carpet, vinyl, and underflooring in my apartment. They painted even though the only thing I ever hung on the walls was one curtain rod. I have numerous pictures which show that the condition of the apartment was excellent. There was no damage whatsoever to the linoleum, yet they replaced all of it and charged me for it. There was no evidence of any issues with subflooring. The walls were clean and there were no nail holes other than for that one curtain rod. I hired a cleaning company for 10 hours of work and the place was spotless and odorless. They charged me \$350 for a lost mailbox key.

I fully expected to pay for new carpet because my cats scratched some of it. But Valley Rental charged me for carpet cleaning AND new carpet. They stated on the bill that the reason for carpet replacement was "pet scratched," so why clean it first at my expense.

They claimed that my apartment smelled, but the cleaners said it did not and so did my mom and fiance. They can't prove there's an odor, so it's an easy way to replace flooring at a renter's expense.

I could not afford a lawyer to represent me in court and small claims court was a several months long wait. By that time my charges had been sent to collections. Later when looking at the few pictures that had been uploaded to my rent portal by Valley Rental, I saw that they hadnt even taken pictures of the correct garage. They charged me for "carry out" of a bunch of items in another garage with the garage number, which was not mine, clearly visible in the photo!

I am 23 years old and my credit has been negatively affected by Valley Rental. If it wouldnt have been for my now husband I would have been homeless because very few companies will rent to individuals with low credit.

According to google reviews, my experience with renting in ND is not unusual. I counted 594 1 star reviews on google, and that was from only 20 of the rental companies in North Dakota. A number of the bad reviews were related to unreasonable move out charges, and extreme difficulty in contacting their rental company.

37 percent of North Dakotans are renters, including many military and college students. That 37 percent of our

population is without adequate protection and security when it comes to renting. Im not a bitter renter who destroyed their unit and is just looking to get away with itIm one of many other renters this has happened to. If a renter destroys a property then the landlord deserves compensation but renters also deserve to be protected from financial ruin and homelessness due to unfair and unreasonable move out charges. This bill is protection for both parties. Over 1,000 people gathered together in my facebook group and even if they couldnt all be here today we all want change.

Please pass HB 1272. Thank you.