

Chairman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kara Bender-Lloyd and I reside in Bismarck, North Dakota. Thank you for considering my testimony today.

In March of 2023, I moved out of River Ridge apartments, owned by Centerspace LLC, in South Bismarck. After I had moved out, I received notice that the carpet was being replaced in the apartment I had moved out of, and I was responsible for the cost. I figured this was a mistake, so I spoke to the manager to have it corrected. I was told that after we had done the move-out inspection, where I was present, they brought in a company to do a “black light test” on the carpets. They told me my carpets failed the black light test, so they needed to be replaced. They had kept \$850 of my security deposit to replace the carpets in the unit. They had no record of whether the previous tenant had this test done. I also mentioned that many things glow under black light, including cleaning products, but they refused to give me my deposit. I was also present for the walk-through, where they signed off on my carpets being in perfect condition at the time of move-out.

I took them to small claims court and got my money back because there was nothing in the lease about this black light test, and the judge determined it wasn’t reliable enough to detect pet stains or any other non-visible stains. However, I can’t imagine how many other people were not able to fight this charge or weren’t aware that they could. Had I not had enough money in my security deposit, or had the company ignored my request to take them to court, I could have had my credit destroyed or been unable to rent in the future. This type of thing should not happen to anyone. As housing prices continue to become unaffordable for many, we must protect the good people who need to rent. Please consider HB 1272. Renters' rights are long overdue.