

HB 1737 -- Affordable Housing

Sponsor: Storch

This bill establishes the Universal Design in Affordable Housing Act which specifies the design standards and requirements for the construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing units so that they will be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. In its main provisions, the bill:

(1) Specifies that the standards will include where the unit is located, sidewalks, parking, entries, mailboxes, hallways, bathrooms, bedrooms, closets, laundry, windows, doors, stairs, kitchens, and recommendations for elements inside the unit;

(2) Prohibits exceptions to the four basic elements of universal design which are one no-step entry; minimum door and hallway width requirements; provisions for usable bathroom facilities in the unit; and at least one accessible bedroom on an accessible level which is connected to an accessible route;

(3) Requires developers using public funds for affordable housing to obtain training on universal design at their expense; and

(4) Defines "affordable housing unit" as a residential structure which a person earning no more than 115% of the median county income for the county in which the person lives, as determined by the United States Bureau of the Census, could afford if spending 29% of his or her gross annual income on the housing.