A BILL

FOR

AN ACT TO REGULATE RENTAL PAYMENTS, PROHIBIT COMPULSORY MULTIPLE-YEAR RENT DEMANDS; HOUSING AGENCY PRACTICES AND RENT INCREASES IN THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY; TO ESTABLISH A UNIFIED DIGITAL REGISTER FOR HOUSING AGENTS; TO PRESCRIBE AGENCY FEES; TO PROTECT LANDLORDS AND TENANTS; AND FOR RELATED MATTERS

Sponsored by Hon. Paul Sunday Nnamchi

[ ] Commencement

ENACTED by the National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as follows:

PART I - PRELIMINARY

1. The objectives of this Act are to- Objectives of the Act

(a) regulate advance rental payments for residential and commercial premises in the Federal Capital Territory;

(b) prohibit compulsory demands for multiple years' rent in advance;

(c) establish a transparent and unified system for registering and regulating housing agents;

(d) prescribe reasonable limits on agency fees and other rental transaction charges;

(e) prevent arbitrary rent increases, artificial rent inflation, exploitation and coercive rental practices; and

(f) establish effective enforcement, complaint resolution and penalties for violations.

2. Application Application

This Act applies to landlords, tenants, housing agents, property managers and other persons engaged in the letting or management of residential and

commercial premises within the Federal Capital Territory.

PART II - REGULATION OF ADVANCE RENTAL PAYMENTS

Maximum Advance Rent

3.-(1) A landlord shall not compulsorily demand, and a tenant shall not be compelled to pay, more than twelve months' rent in advance for residential or commercial premises.

(2) A tenancy agreement or arrangement requiring compulsory payment of rent for multiple years in advance shall, to the extent of the excess, be unenforceable.

(3) A landlord or agent shall not circumvent this section by describing advance rent as a deposit, premium, administrative charge or any other payment intended to secure additional rent in advance.

(4) This section does not prohibit a voluntary arrangement permitted by law where the tenant is not subjected to coercion or made to suffer a disadvantage for refusing it.

Prohibition of Coercive Rental Practices

4. A landlord or housing agent shall not:

(a) compel a tenant to pay multiple years' rent in advance contrary to this Act;

(b) demand undisclosed charges as a condition for securing premises;

(c) threaten, intimidate or unlawfully evict a tenant for refusing an unlawful rental demand;

(d) disconnect essential services unlawfully to force a tenant to vacate premises; or

(e) make false representations concerning rent, availability, ownership or the terms of a tenancy.

Receipts and Written Tenancy Terms

5.-(1) Every landlord or authorised agent shall issue a receipt for rent and other lawful payments received.

(2) A tenancy agreement shall state the rent payable, duration of tenancy, payment schedule, agency fees, applicable deposits and conditions for rent review.

(3) No undisclosed fee or payment shall be recoverable from a tenant.

PART III - REGISTRATION AND REGULATION OF HOUSING AGENTS

Establishment of a unified Housing Agents platform

6.-(1) The Authority shall establish and maintain a unified digital platform for the registration, licensing, monitoring and regulation of housing agents operating within the Federal Capital Territory.

(2) The platform shall contain:

(a) the names and verified identities of registered agents and their business entities;

(b) registration and licence numbers and validity status;

(c) verified business addresses and contact details;

(d) records of properties and transactions, subject to applicable data-protection laws;

(e) prescribed agency fees and complaints or disciplinary decisions; and

(f) a public search facility through which members of the public may verify an agent's registration.

(3) The Authority shall ensure that the platform is accessible, secure, transparent and regularly updated.

Mandatory Registration and Licensing

7.-(1) A person shall not carry on business as a housing agent within the Federal Capital Territory unless registered and licensed by the Authority.

(2) An applicant shall satisfy prescribed requirements relating to identity verification, professional competence, business address, ethical conduct and accountability.

(3) A registered agent shall display the agent's registration number on advertisements, transaction documents and receipts.

(4) A landlord shall not knowingly engage an unregistered housing agent in a transaction regulated by this Act.

(5) The Authority may suspend or revoke a licence for fraud, repeated overcharging, collusion, rent manipulation or other serious misconduct, subject to fair hearing.

Regulation of Agency Fees

8.-(1) The maximum agency fee for a letting transaction shall be five per cent (5%) of the annual rent payable under the tenancy agreement, or such lower percentage as may be prescribed by regulations.

(2) An agent shall not charge a fee exceeding the prescribed limit, impose hidden charges or collect duplicate fees for the same service.

(3) An agent shall disclose the full agency fee in writing before the tenant commits to the transaction.

(4) An agent shall not charge both landlord and tenant for the same service without prior written disclosure and lawful agreement, and the aggregate charge shall not exceed the prescribed maximum for that service.

(5) No fee shall be charged for a service not actually provided or for access to a property where such charge is prohibited by regulations.

(6) The Authority may prescribe different fee limits for distinct categories of services, provided that the limits are reasonable, transparent and publicly available.

Prohibition of Rent manipulation by agents

9. A housing agent shall not-

(a) deliberately inflate a landlord's stated rent to increase commission;

(b) collude with other agents or landlords to create artificial scarcity or inflate prevailing rents;

(c) advertise a property at a false price or misrepresent comparable market rents;

(d) demand payment for a property without proper authority to offer it for letting; or

(e) use multiple listings, false offers or fabricated competing tenants to manipulate rental prices.

PART IV - RENT TRANSPARENCY AND REVIEW

Regulation of Arbitrary Rent increases

10.-(1) A landlord shall not impose an arbitrary, deceptive or retaliatory rent increase.

(2) A proposed rent increase shall be communicated in writing within

the applicable statutory notice period and shall state the proposed rent, effective date and basis for the increase.

(3) In determining whether an increase is reasonable, regard shall be had to-

(a) prevailing rents for comparable premises in the locality;

(b) inflation and relevant economic conditions;

(c) the condition, location and facilities of the premises;

(d) material improvements made to the premises; and

(e) the terms of the tenancy agreement and applicable law.

(4) The Authority shall prescribe a transparent rent-review framework, including any applicable percentage limits, exemptions and procedures for approving exceptional increases.

(5) A tenant may challenge a rent increase alleged to be unlawful or unreasonable before the Authority or a court of competent jurisdiction, as applicable.

Transparency in Rental Advertisements

11.-(1) A landlord or agent advertising premises shall disclose the actual annual rent and material charges payable.

(2) A person shall not publish a misleading rental price or collude to create a false impression of prevailing market rates.

(3) The Authority may maintain and publish periodic rental market information for different districts and categories of premises within the Federal Capital Territory.

PART V - ENFORCEMENT, COMPLAINTS AND PENALTIES

Complaints and Dispute Resolution

12.-(1) The Authority shall establish an accessible mechanism for receiving and investigating complaints from landlords, tenants and other affected persons.

(2) The Authority may facilitate mediation, conciliation and other lawful forms of alternative dispute resolution.

(3) Nothing in this Act shall prevent a person from seeking relief before a court of competent jurisdiction.

Inspection and Investigation

13. The Authority may, in accordance with applicable law:

(a) request records relating to a regulated rental transaction;

(b) investigate suspected violations;

(c) require a registered agent to produce relevant transaction documents; and

(d) refer suspected criminal conduct to the appropriate law-enforcement agency.

Offences and Penalties

14.-(1) A landlord or agent who knowingly contravenes section 4 of this Act commits an offence and is liable, upon conviction, to a fine of not less than ₦500,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, or both.

(2) A housing agent who operates without registration or charges an unlawful agency fee commits an offence and is liable, upon conviction, to a fine of not less than ₦500,000, in addition to refunding any unlawful charge.

(3) A person who engages in deliberate rent manipulation, fraudulent advertising or collusion to inflate rents is liable, upon conviction, to a fine of not less than ₦1,000,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding twelve months, or both.

(4) A person who repeatedly contravenes this Act may be subject to an increased fine, suspension or revocation of licence, restitution to an affected tenant or landlord, or any other penalty authorised by law.

(5) Where an offence is committed by a body corporate, any director, manager or officer who knowingly authorised or participated in the offence may also be liable, subject to applicable law.

Refund and Restitution

15. Where a landlord or agent collects an unlawful fee or payment in contravention of this Act, the Authority or a court of competent jurisdiction may, within its lawful powers, order the refund or restitution of the unlawful amount.

Right to fail hearing

16. No registration, licence or other right shall be suspended or revoked under this Act without notice of the allegation and a reasonable opportunity for the affected person to respond, except where an interim

measure is expressly authorised by law.

PART VI - ADMINISTRATION AND MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Powers to make Regulations

17. The Authority may, with the approval of the appropriate authority, make regulations for the effective implementation of this Act, including regulations on:

(a) registration and renewal of housing agents' licences;

(b) agency fee limits and permissible charges;

(c) rent-review procedures and applicable limits on increases;

(d) record-keeping, receipts and rental advertisements;

(e) complaint handling, mediation and disciplinary procedures; and

(f) operation and maintenance of the unified digital platform.

Protection of existing tenancies

18.-(1) Existing tenancy agreements shall remain valid, subject to applicable law.

(2) Any renewal, extension or new rental transaction occurring after the commencement of this Act shall comply with its provisions.

(3) The Authority may prescribe transitional arrangements to enable existing housing agents to register and obtain licences within six months of commencement.

Relationship with other Laws

19.-(1) This Act shall be read together with other applicable laws governing tenancy, property, consumer protection, data protection and the administration of the Federal Capital Territory.

(2) Where a provision of this Act conflicts with another applicable law, the matter shall be resolved in accordance with the Constitution and the applicable rules of statutory interpretation.

Interpretation

20. In this Act:

"Authority" means the Federal Capital Territory Rent and Housing Regulatory Authority established or designated under this Act;

"housing agent" means a person or business that, for remuneration, introduces landlords and prospective tenants, negotiates tenancy

agreements, collects rent on behalf of landlords or provides other professional letting services;

"unified platform" means the official digital register and regulatory platform established under this Act;

"advance rent" means rent demanded or paid before or at the commencement of the period for which the rent is payable;

"agency fee" means remuneration charged for professional services relating to the letting, renewal or management of premises;

"rent inflation" means an unjustified or artificially induced increase in rent through collusion, misrepresentation, false market information or other prohibited practices;

"premises" includes residential and commercial buildings or parts thereof let or offered for letting.

Short title

21. This Bill may be cited as the Federal Capital Territory Rent and Housing Agents Regulation Bill, 2026.

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

This Bill seeks to regulate advance rental payments in the Federal Capital Territory, prevent compulsory multiple-year rent demands and arbitrary rent increases, establish a unified digital platform for registering and regulating housing agents, prescribe limits on agency fees, prohibit rent manipulation and coercive rental practices, and provide effective mechanisms for enforcement, dispute resolution and penalties for non-compliance.