



Ohio Coalition To Restore Fair Housing

WORKING TO END HOUSING DISCRIMINATION

www.RestoreFairHousing.org

ENDORSEMENT FORM

What Does Ohio Fair Housing Law Say?

In 1992, Ohio modified its fair housing law to be “substantially equivalent” to the federal Fair Housing Act. This allows Ohio to participate in a federal program to have the Ohio Civil Rights Commission (OCRC) investigate and process complaints of housing discrimination filed by Ohio residents; and further provides Ohio with over \$1,000,000 in federal aid each year to carry-out this work. This federal program is called the Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP).

What is the Problem?

In the past two years, Ohio courts have interpreted Ohio’s fair housing laws in a manner that is **not** substantially equivalent to the Fair Housing Act, as required under by federal regulations. For example, these rulings have held:

- where a developer or architect violates Ohio law by building inaccessible housing, disabled individuals can only file a case in the first year after the property is built, even if they do not encounter the problem until later;
- that even after the Ohio Attorney General proves that a developer has constructed inaccessible housing in violation of Ohio’s laws, the courts may not require the developer to correct violations through retrofits or repairs and may not order penalties or monetary damages;
- that non-profit fair housing organizations that provide assistance to individuals are not able to bring cases under Ohio law, despite almost 40 years of case law finding them eligible to do so.
- that a public housing provider does not have a responsibility to take corrective action, when it has direct knowledge that tenants are harassing other tenants because of race, sex, etc.

In a February 18, 2009 letter to the Ohio Civil Rights Commission, the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) noted that Ohio’s fair housing law is no longer equivalent to the federal law. The letter states that if Ohio does not bring its law back into compliance with the federal law by June 30, 2009, HUD will “recommend that Ohio fair housing law not be recertified,” ending Ohio’s participation in the federal program. This means that the Ohio Civil Rights Commission will no longer be eligible for funding through the Fair Housing Assistance Program, which currently provides the state with over \$1,000,000 per year.

Why Should This Matter to You?

Fair housing laws protect all Ohio citizens from housing discrimination. The laws prohibit housing discrimination based on race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, religion, familial status, disability, and military status

What Are We Asking For?

Fix Ohio's Fair Housing Law Now!

We are not asking for any new rights. Rather, we are simply asking that Ohio's law be restored to "substantial equivalence" to the federal Fair Housing Act. The Ohio Legislature must take immediate action to clarify Ohio's fair housing law and bring it back into substantial equivalence with federal law. Currently, language has been proposed to House Bill 1 (the state budget bill) that will correct some of the issues that Ohio courts have ruled upon. We support those provisions of HB1, although not all of the issues have been addressed in HB1.

We ask that the legislature Fix Ohio's Fair Housing Law Now – to comprehensively address all of the issues that threaten to cause Ohio to lose its substantial equivalent status and the millions of dollars that go with that status.

How You Can Help

Join the Ohio Coalition to Restore Fair Housing (OCR FH) in calling on the Ohio Legislature to pass legislation to restore Ohio's fair housing law and once again make it equivalent to the federal Fair Housing Act. **Doing so not only protects Ohio residents from housing discrimination, but it also ensures that complaints filed by Ohioans are decided in Ohio, and it keeps Ohio from losing out on millions of dollars in federal support for this important work. For additional information, go to the coalition's website www.restorefairhousing.org.**

By signing below:

- I hereby endorse the work of **The Ohio Coalition to Restore Fair Housing**.
- I think that Ohio's fair housing law should be substantially equivalent to the Federal Fair Housing Act.
- I also give my permission to use my name and/or organization as an endorser of the

Ohio Coalition to Restore Fair Housing

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Contact Name: _____

Organization: (if any) _____

Address: _____

Address 2: _____

City/Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Please return this form to:

Ohio Coalition to Restore Fair Housing – Working to End Housing Discrimination

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