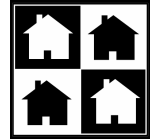


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**EMBARGOED UNTIL WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12, 2006, NOON**

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## Housing Discrimination Widespread in Region: Most Complaints Filed Based on Race & Disability

There are over 33,000 instances of housing discrimination a year against African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, and Asian and Pacific Islanders in Northeast Ohio, according to a new report issued by the Housing Research & Advocacy Center in Cleveland.

In addition, of the housing discrimination cases filed with federal or state civil rights agencies in the period 2000-2004, the last five years for which complete data is available, 32.4% involved race discrimination, 32.0% alleged discrimination based on disability, and 23.0% alleged discrimination based on familial status. The number of cases filed in this period represent a doubling of the number of cases filed based on disability and familial status discrimination, compared to the previous five-year period.

Federal law prohibit discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, familial status and handicap. In addition, Ohio law prohibits discrimination based on ancestry. The Housing Center's report addresses how these prohibitions are being implemented locally, as well as what types of local laws have been passed to prohibit housing discrimination.

The Housing Center's report, entitled "The State of Fair Housing in Northeast Ohio," provides the first comprehensive look at local fair housing ordinances in a six-county region made up of Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina Counties. It found that in this region, 46 localities have fair housing ordinances, including 32 in Cuyahoga County, 2 in Ashtabula County, 3 in Lake County, 7 in Lorain County, and 2 in Medina County. (There are no local fair housing ordinances in Geauga County.)

*-more-*

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Some of these local ordinances provide additional protection beyond that provided in state and federal law, prohibiting discrimination against age (16 ordinances), creed (15), marital status (14), sexual orientation (7), ethnic group (2), disabled veteran status (2), and Vietnam veteran status (2).

Among the report's other findings:

- an average of 111.8 administrative complaints were filed annually with the Ohio Civil Rights Commission and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development from 2000-2004, an increase from the average of 79.6 filed from 1995-1999;
- from 1980 to 2000, segregation slightly decreased for African Americans in the region, while segregation for Hispanics/Latinos remained constant.

Jeffrey D. Dillman, Executive Director of the Housing Center, stated, "This report documents for the first time the extent of housing discrimination in the region and shows how far our region has to go to end this practice. It is time for governments at all levels to make a strong stand against housing discrimination and to commit additional resources to ensure that all individuals have an opportunity to choose their housing free from discrimination."

The report recommends that local governments enact stronger fair housing laws, implement comprehensive education efforts, and vigorously enforce fair housing laws through systemic testing for discrimination as a means of addressing housing discrimination in the region.

The Housing Research & Advocacy Center is releasing this report to coincide with National Fair Housing Month, which is celebrated in April. Copies of the report are available by contacting the Housing Center or on its website at <<http://www.thehousingcenter.org>>.

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The Housing Research & Advocacy Center is a nonprofit fair housing organization whose mission is to eliminate housing discrimination and assure choice in Northeast Ohio by providing those at risk with effective information, intervention and advocacy. The Housing Center was founded in 1983 as the Metropolitan Strategy Group and changed its name in 2003.

The full report is available under embargo at  
<http://www.thehousingcenter.org/StateofFairHousing.htm>

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