

**No. R-417. House concurrent resolution recognizing April 2014 as Fair Housing Month in Vermont.**

(H.C.R.307)

House concurrent resolution recognizing April 2014 as Fair Housing Month in Vermont

Offered by: Representatives Ram of Burlington, Ancel of Calais, Burke of Brattleboro, Christie of Hartford, Clarkson of Woodstock, Cole of Burlington, Connor of Fairfield, Conquest of Newbury, Davis of Washington, Donovan of Burlington, Ellis of Waterbury, Frank of Underhill, Haas of Rochester, Head of South Burlington, Heath of Westford, Hooper of Montpelier, Keenan of St. Albans City, Kitzmiller of Montpelier, Krowinski of Burlington, Kupersmith of South Burlington, Macaig of Williston, Malcolm of Pawlet, Marcotte of Coventry, McCarthy of St. Albans City, McCormack of Burlington, McCullough of Williston, McFaun of Barre Town, O'Brien of Richmond, O'Sullivan of Burlington, Pearson of Burlington, Poirier of Barre City, Pugh of South Burlington, Rachelson of Burlington, Ralston of Middlebury, South of St. Johnsbury, Stevens of Waterbury, Townsend of South Burlington, Vowinkel of Hartford, Weed of Enosburgh, and Wright of Burlington

Whereas, for generations, millions of Americans were denied the housing of their choice because of factors such as race, ethnicity, or religion, and

Whereas, on April 11, 1968, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1968, including Title VIII, known as the Fair Housing Act, and

Whereas, Vermont's Fair Housing Act, enacted in 1987 and expanded in subsequent legislative acts, now prohibits discrimination in the rental or sale of housing based on "race, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, religious creed, color, national origin, or handicap of a person, or because a person intends to occupy a dwelling with one or more minor children, or because a person is a recipient of public assistance," making this law more protective than the federal statutes and among the most comprehensive in the nation, and

Whereas, despite both these federal and State legal guarantees, the dilemma of housing discrimination in Vermont has not disappeared, and

Whereas, as recently as 2012, a Vermont Legal Aid field investigation documented significant landlord bias barriers in Chittenden County for persons of color, foreign origin, or with children, and that accessibility problems for those with disabilities were significant, and

Whereas, the damage resulting from Tropical Storm Irene in 2011 reduced affordable housing options in some communities, especially mobile homes, and Whereas, 2012 Acts and Resolves No. 137 created new incentives for mobile home park development as a way to increase the availability of affordable housing, and

Whereas, this act strengthened the antidiscrimination requirements of mobile home park leases, and added a new provision banning municipal planning policies that discriminate against affordable housing, and

Whereas, the Governor's designation of April as Fair Housing Month highlights the crucial but unfinished effort to eliminate all vestiges of housing discrimination in Vermont, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly recognizes April as Fair Housing Month in Vermont, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Vermont Human Rights Commission.