



Illinois Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights

Changing Housing Policy to Protect Civil Rights

The Illinois Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights conducted an examination of fair and equitable access to housing in Illinois. At a briefing in May, 2019, the committee heard testimony from numerous stakeholders which led to a December, 2020, report.

The Illinois committee gathered direct testimonial evidence from citizens, experts, fair housing advocates, academics, industry leaders, and public officials regarding fair housing in the state, as well as noted disparities on the basis of race, color, disability status, national origin, age, religion, and/or sex.

Based on the testimony received at the May 2019 briefing, the committee agreed upon several policy recommendations.

Policy Recommendations

1. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights should recommend that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and other agencies responsible for the investigation of complaints and enforcement of fair housing laws should be adequately staffed and funded to allow for proper investigation of complaints and enforcement of fair housing laws.
2. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights should advise the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to make available on the internet public education and guidance about housing rights and information on how to file a complaint.

Key Policy Recommendations:

- HUD Enforcement Offices must be fully staffed.
- HUD must establish reporting requirements for entitlement communities to ensure benchmarks and goals are met.
- Public education and guidance regarding housing rights and information on how to file a complaint should be readily available on the internet.
- Fair housing laws should be amended to prevent unfair discrimination based on criminal history.
- Fair housing laws should be amended to prevent discrimination based on source of income, such as HUD section 8 and housing choice vouchers.
- Occupancy limits for local municipalities must be reviewed for compliance with occupancy limits.

3. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights should recommend that the Department of Housing and Urban Development establish reporting requirements for fair housing complaints and subsequent investigations.

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4. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights should recommend to the United States Congress that the fair housing laws should be amended to prevent unfair discrimination based on criminal history.
5. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights should recommend that Illinois and federal law be amended to prevent discrimination based on source of income, such as HUD Section 8 and other housing choice vouchers.
6. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights should encourage Illinois local municipalities to review occupancy limits to ensure compliance with local, state, and federal law.
7. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights should encourage partnerships between fair housing advocates and local/state agencies and the real estate private sector in order to foster enhanced communication related to fair housing.



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