

Advocacy Talking Points -- April is Fair Housing Month

April 2019

- For more than half a century, The Fair Housing Act has protected the American Dream for millions of people across this country.
- The law protects Americans against undue discrimination as they pursue their right of property and homeownership. Last year, NAR recognized the 50th Anniversary of the Fair Housing Act, with the message “Fair Housing Makes U.S. Stronger.”
- The Fair Housing Act goes beyond a list of dos and don’ts, rights and penalties, and mandatory continuing education.
- As stewards of the right to own, use, and transfer private property, the Act protects the livelihood of REALTORS who depend on a free, open market that embraces equal opportunity.
- Ultimately, the National Association of REALTORS is committed to working with both public and private entities to eliminate all discrimination from our housing market.
- Now in its 51st year, lawmakers are considering new ways to strengthen and support this landmark Act. This year, REALTORS are also working to increase member and public awareness of these critical issues during Fair Housing Month, and we’re commemorating this important milestone by highlighting key issue areas that will set the tone for the future of fair housing.

The Equality Act

- On March 13, 2019, Rep. David Cicillini (D-PA) introduced H.R. 5, the Equality Act, in the U.S. House of Representatives.
- This bill amends the Fair Housing Act to prohibit all forms of housing, employment, credit, public accommodations and voting rights discrimination against the LGBT community. The legislation also aligns with NAR's Code of Ethics.
- NAR will monitor this bill as it progresses through the legislative process, and we will continue to express our support for provisions that amend the Fair Housing Act to provide protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity. If the bill passes, we will work to address and reform NAR's internal policies in order to ensure the law is effectively and appropriately implemented.

African-American Homeownership

- NAR is supporting and joining efforts initiated by the National Association of Real Estate Brokers (NAREB) and the Urban Institute to address the continued low rate of African-American homeownership.

- According to NAREB's 2018 State of Housing in Black America report, there was a 30 percent gap in homeownership between African-Americans and non-Hispanic Caucasians between 2015 and 2016. This 30-percentage-point gap in homeownership (72%-42%) is the highest it has been in the new millennium.
- Black homeownership is more than 7 percentage points below its peak, achieved in 2004, of just under 50 percent.

Fair Housing – The Future is Our Story to Write

- The issue of Fair Housing extends beyond the Fair Housing Act. Every day in neighborhoods across the country, REALTORS see how schools, economic development opportunities, and access to healthcare and wellness facilities all impact clients as they search for their next home.
- As we again recognize April as Fair Housing Month, REALTORS and REALTOR Associations throughout the U.S. have an opportunity to be heard as local governments examine the relationship between historic land use and zoning decisions and current housing options available to everyone in America.
- To learn more about Fair Housing, visit www.fairhousing.realtor.