



For Immediate Release

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Equal Rights Center Lauds Introduction of HOME Act *Act would amend Fair Housing Act and expand federally protected classes*

WASHINGTON, D.C., December 9, 2010—The Equal Rights Center—a national civil rights non-profit—applauds the introduction of the Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) Act. The legislation would amend the Fair Housing Act to prohibit discrimination in the sale or rental of housing, the financing of housing, and in brokerage services on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, source of income, or marital status.

“In light of the many complaints we receive each year and the Equal Rights Center's own investigations and testing, we are sadly aware of the desperate need for these protections at the federal level. We wholeheartedly endorse these enhancements of the Fair Housing Act and hope that all those dedicated to the principles of civil rights and fair housing will do the same,” said ERC Executive Director, Don Kahl.

Introduced yesterday by Congressmen Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), chairman of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, the HOME Act expands federally protected classes protected classes from seven to eleven; adding of sexual orientation, gender identity, source of income, or marital status.

“The Equal Rights Center’s office is located in D.C., a jurisdiction with one of the most comprehensive human rights laws that protects 19 classes. Yet we often receive discrimination complaints from individuals in areas that do not offer the same protections,” said the ERC’s Fair Housing Program Manager, John Baker. “An individual’s right to choose where he or she lives affects all aspects of life, and the HOME Act would allow us, and all those furthering fair housing, to work to ensure that all individuals are treated fairly.”

The Fair Housing Act, passed in 1968, is a federal law that prohibits discrimination in the sale or rental of housing, and in other housing-related transactions based on certain personal attributes—otherwise known as protected classes. When first enacted, protected classes included race, color, religion, sex and national origin. In response to the evolving scope of civil rights, in 1988 the law was amended to include disability and familial status. A number of state and local human rights acts have recognized the need for additional protections and added sexual orientation, gender identity, source of income, and marital status to their list of protected classes.

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About the Equal Rights Center (www.equalrightscenter.org)

Originally formed in 1983, the Equal Rights Center (ERC) is a national non-profit civil rights organization based in Washington, D.C. With members located in 33 states and the District of Columbia, the ERC works nationally to promote equal opportunity in housing, employment, disability rights, immigrant rights, and access to public accommodations and government services for all protected classes under federal, state, and local laws.