

No. R-190. House concurrent resolution designating April as Fair Housing Month in Vermont.

(H.C.R.156)

Offered by: Representatives Head of South Burlington and Ram of Burlington

Whereas, the right to dwell wherever any individual wishes without regard to race, religion, national origin, gender, or age was not historically enshrined in federal law, and

Whereas, for generations, millions of Americans were denied the housing of their choice because of one of these factors, and

Whereas, despite the United States Supreme Court's prohibition in 1948 of judicial enforcement of restrictive covenants in the case of Shelley v Kraemer, discriminatory housing policies in neighborhoods and even entire communities continued to be legal if privately enforced, and

Whereas, by the middle 1960s, following Congress's passage of both the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, housing discrimination remained a barrier in both the rental and sales markets, and

Whereas, the open housing marches that the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. led in Chicago in 1966, his assassination on April 4, 1968, and the riots that followed in its wake proved the catalyst that finally persuaded Congress of the necessity to enact federal fair housing legislation, and

Whereas, Congress responded with unusual haste to President Johnson's urgent appeal, and, within days, on April 11, 1968, he signed the Civil Rights Act of 1968, Title VIII of which is known as the Fair Housing Act, and

Whereas, the legislative breakthrough achieved in this act began a process of guaranteeing that individuals could rent or purchase a home without regard to their race, religion, national origin, age, or gender, and, as the act was later amended, disability, and

Whereas, in observance of the signing of the Fair Housing Act of 1968, many jurisdictions are designating April as Fair Housing Month in order both to remember the passage of this historic legislation and to renew the commitment to fair and open housing for all Americans, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly designates 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.