

**No. R-129. House concurrent resolution designating April 2017 as Fair Housing Month in Vermont.**

(H.C.R.99)

Offered by: Representatives Head of South Burlington, Stevens of Waterbury, Christie of Hartford, Howard of Rutland City, Scheuermann of Stowe, Smith of Derby, Strong of Albany, Tate of Mendon, and Walz of Barre City

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Whereas, Vermont's fair housing statutes, originally enacted as part of 1987 Acts and Resolves No. 74, and since broadened and codified at 9 V.S.A § 4503, prohibit discrimination in the rental or sale of housing based on "race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, marital status, religious creed, color, national origin, or disability 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, Vermont has a proud and peaceful history of welcoming immigrants and refugees, and

Whereas, on January 29, 2017, Governor Phil Scott issued a statement proclaiming Vermont's continuing commitment to diversity, and welcoming everyone to our great State, and

Whereas, despite both federal and State legal guarantees, in Vermont overt and disguised housing discrimination has not disappeared, and

Whereas, for example, HUD-funded Vermont Legal Aid investigations of housing practices documented significant housing access barriers in Vermont for persons based on their race or national origin and for persons either living with children or who have disabilities, and

Whereas, discrimination in housing on these grounds is an affront to human dignity and can negatively affect all aspects of a person's life: from education, work, and health care to access to transportation, and

Whereas, designating April as Fair Housing Month heightens covered classes' awareness of their right to be protected against discrimination and of the importance of building thriving communities through policies of inclusiveness, and

Whereas, fair housing advocates are visiting the State House today, April 4, 2017, to remind legislators of this important message, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly designates April 2017 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.