

No. R-395. House concurrent resolution commemorating the 50th anniversary of the federal Fair Housing Act and designating April 2018 as Fair Housing Month in Vermont.

(H.C.R.321)

Offered by: Representatives Head of South Burlington, Christie of Hartford, Gonzalez of Winooski, Howard of Rutland City, Read of Fayston, Scheuermann of Stowe, Stevens of Waterbury, Strong of Albany, and Walz of Barre City

Whereas, on April 11, 1968, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1968, Pub.L. No 90-284, including Title VIII, known as the Fair Housing Act (the Act), and

Whereas, the Act, as amended, mandates a national policy of fair housing without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, or disability, encouraging fair housing opportunities for all citizens, and

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

Whereas, segregated concentrations of people with lower income, especially people of color, have been stuck in communities of lower opportunity than middle and upper income white Americans, and

Whereas, 19 years later, the General Assembly enacted 1987 Acts and Resolves No. 74, "An act relating to discrimination," consisting of a new 9 V.S.A. chapter 139 entitled Discrimination; Public Accommodations; Rental and Sale of Real Estate, and

Whereas, chapter 139, as now codified, also prohibits discrimination in the sale and rental of housing based on sexual orientation, gender identity, having a disability, or having minor children, making Vermont's housing antidiscrimination law among the nation's most comprehensive, and

Whereas, despite both these federal and State legal guarantees, the dilemma of housing discrimination in various forms in Vermont has not disappeared, especially for persons either living with children or with disabilities, and

Whereas, another chapter 139 provision makes it an unfair housing practice in Vermont "to discriminate in land use decisions or the permitting of housing," on account of "income, or because of receipt of public assistance, except as otherwise provided by law," and

Whereas, despite this statutory prohibition, the persistent lack of affordable housing in Vermont is exacerbating discrimination and one of the important reasons vigilance on fair housing issues remains of paramount importance in 2018, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly commemorates the 50th anniversary of the federal Fair Housing Act and designates April 2018 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.