



Governor Douglas proclaims April “Fair Housing Month” in Vermont

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by **Vermont RealEstateRama**

MONTPELIER, Vt. - April 15, 2010 - (RealEstateRama) — Gov. Jim Douglas has signed a proclamation designating April as “Fair Housing Month” in Vermont.

“Vermont has a long history of leadership on civil rights, going back to our constitution, which was the first to abolish slavery,” Governor Douglas said. “Our expanded Fair Housing Act is another example of this, and this month is an opportunity to celebrate that and re-dedicate ourselves to upholding its principles.”

On April 11, 1968 – one week after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. – President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1968, a companion bill to the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Title VIII of this law, known as the Federal Fair Housing Act, protects individuals from discrimination concerning the sale, rental, and financing of housing based on race, religion, national origin, color, or sex, and in 1988 disability and family status were added.

Vermont’s Fair Housing Act builds upon the federal law by adding marital status; age; sexual orientation; gender identity; and receipt of public assistance as protected classes.

“The opportunity for all persons to have a full range of housing choices is important to the well-being of our communities” said Robert Appel, Executive Director of the Vermont Human Rights Commission. “Too often, families with children or persons with disabilities and others afforded protection under the fair housing law are denied rentals or discouraged from seeking housing.”

“Fair housing laws protect civil rights and help Vermont realize the social and economic benefits of diverse, integrated communities,” said Rachel Batterson, Project Manager of Vermont Legal Aid’s Housing Discrimination Law Project.

The Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development works with the Vermont Human Rights Commission; the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity; Vermont Legal Aid; and other partners to ensure access for all Vermonters to housing.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.dhca.state.vt.us/Housing/fairhousing.htm>