

FAIR HOUSING IMPROVEMENT ACT



The Fair Housing Improvement Act ([S.1267/H.R.2846](#)), introduced by Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA) and Representative Scott Peters (D-CA) expands the Fair Housing Act to prohibit housing discrimination based on “source of income” and military and veteran status. NLIHC and the multi-sector [Opportunity Starts at Home](#) campaign support the Fair Housing Improvement Act and urge Congress to enact the bill to help protect low-income households, and veterans and servicemembers, from housing discrimination.

Background

Making rental assistance available to all eligible households is central to any successful strategy to solve the housing crisis. A growing body of research finds that increasing access to stable, affordable housing can: improve [health outcomes for children, adults and seniors](#); improve [educational outcomes](#) for children; increase families’ opportunity of [upward economic mobility](#) and ability to exit poverty; increase [racial equity](#) and [gender equity](#); and reduce barriers to stability for [people re-entering society after transitioning out of the criminal justice system](#).

Too often, households can struggle to find landlords willing to accept their housing assistance, including HUD Housing Choice Vouchers, Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) vouchers, or other state and local resources. [Landlords frequently discriminate](#) against households receiving rental assistance, often as a proxy for racial discrimination, leaving these households with few options for where to live. [Research](#) shows landlords deny housing to households with federal rental assistance, particularly in markets without source of income protections.

Housing discrimination prevents low-income people from living in neighborhoods of their choice, including areas with access to jobs that pay decent wages, high-performing schools, healthcare, and transit.

While [several states and localities](#) have passed source of income protection laws, federal law does not protect against this type of discrimination, and state and local enforcement varies widely. A federal solution is needed.

The Fair Housing Improvement Act:

- Expands the Fair Housing Act of 1968 to prohibit housing discrimination based on “military status,” “veteran status,” and “source of income.” In doing so, the bill will make it easier for low-income households, veterans, and servicemembers to access affordable housing in communities of their choice.
- Protects housing and service programs designed to serve veterans and low-income households. Programs that are designed to serve veterans or military families, such as HUD-VASH or Tribal HUD-VASH, may continue to serve those populations.
- Provides landlords 40 months to come into compliance. Landlords will have the time needed to understand and implement the law in practice.

Over 70 national organizations have endorsed the Fair Housing Improvement Act, including:

A Way Home America; American Association of Service Coordinators; Catholic Charities USA; Center for Community Progress; Center for Disability Rights; Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP); Children's Defense Fund; Children's HealthWatch; Church World Service; Coalition on Human Needs; Community Change Action; Community Solutions International; Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces; Council of State Community Development Agencies; Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH); Disability Rights Advocates; Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund; Economic Policy Institute; Enterprise Community Partners; Funders Together to End Homelessness; Grounded Solutions Network; Healthcare Anchor Network; Hispanic Federation; Housing Assistance Council; Housing Justice Center; Justice in Aging; Leaders and Organizers for Tenant Empowerment (LOFTE) Network; LeadingAge; Local Initiatives Support Corporation; Low Income Investment Fund; Mobility Works; National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd; National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations (NACEDA); National Alliance to End Homelessness; National Association for County Community and Economic Development; National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders; National Association of Local Housing Finance Agencies; National Association of Social Workers; National CAPACD; National Center for Housing & Child Welfare; National Coalition for the Homeless; National Community Action Partnership; National Community Development Association; National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low-income consumers); National Disability Institute; National Disability Rights Network (NDRN); National Domestic Violence Hotline; National Health Care for the Homeless Council; National HIV/AIDS Housing Coalition; National Homelessness Law Center; National Housing Law Project; National Housing Resource Center; National Housing Trust; National Low Income Housing Coalition; National NeighborWorks Association; National Network to End Domestic Violence; National Resource Center on Domestic Violence; National WIC Association; National Women's Law Center; National Resources Defense Council; NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice; Opportunity Starts at Home campaign; Paralyzed Veterans of America; Poverty & Race Research Action Council; Prosperity Now; Public Advocacy for Kids; Shriver Center on Poverty Law; Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future; StriveTogether; Technical Assistance Collaborative; The Kelsey; Union for Reform Judaism; Up for Growth Action; ZERO TO THREE

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