



HOUSING RIGHTS CENTER

WORKING FOR JUSTICE AND EQUALITY IN HOUSING

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HUD WILL COMBAT HOUSING DISCRIMINATION BASED ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

[CALIFORNIA, FEBRUARY 2021]—The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced it will, for the first time, work to combat discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. All HUD offices and HUD funded partners are to immediately assess their activities and take the appropriate actions to ensure the Fair Housing Act is fully enforced.

The Housing Rights Center welcomes the expansion of federal housing protections to the nation’s LGBTQ+ communities. This guidance from HUD has powerful significance for all federally funded agencies as well as for the 27 states that still do not ban housing discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals. The administration’s commitment will help to ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer-identifying individuals are delivered the full promise of the Fair Housing Act.

The development of LGBTQ+ protections for Californians began in 1992 when Californians were protected from discrimination based on sexual orientation under the state Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA). By 2003, these protections were strengthened to include gender identity and expression. One year later, California expanded FEHA to prohibit discrimination based on “gender,” including Assembly Bill 196, which was intended to prohibit discrimination against transgender employees. Finally, the Civil Rights Act of 2005 established laws against discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status in business practices—including shopping malls, bars and restaurants, schools, medical offices, and other services used by the public.

“As a HUD partner agency, the Housing Rights Center is now able to invest further resources in helping those who have been affected by this pernicious form of discrimination,” said Chancela Al-Mansour, Executive Director of the Housing Rights Center. “Housing security and public health are deeply intertwined, and our current circumstances make it more

important than ever that all individuals, regardless of how they identify or who they love, have equal access to housing and fair treatment.”

HUD’s directive comes in light of President Biden’s [Executive Order 13988](#), which calls for the advancement of LGBTQ+ rights and protections throughout American society. The order cites *Bostock v. Clayton County* (2020), an employment discrimination case in which the Supreme Court held that sexual orientation and gender identity fall under the category of discrimination on the basis on sex as defined in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Read HUD’s memorandum [here](#).

The Housing Rights Center is committed to the fight against housing discrimination. Individuals who feel they have been discriminated against for their sexual orientation and/or gender identity can contact HRC to have their case investigated free of charge.

For more information on the Housing Rights Center and its free services, please visit www.housingrightscenter.org or call 1-800-477-5977 (TTY: 213-201-0867). Follow HRC on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to stay updated on housing news.

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The Housing Rights Center is a non-profit organization established in 1968 to actively support and promote equal opportunity and freedom of residence to all persons without regard to their race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, familial status, disability, marital status, ancestry, age, source of income, or other characteristics protected by law. HRC engages in activities including outreach and education, testing and investigation, and legal advocacy to identify barriers to fair housing and to counteract and eliminate discriminatory housing practices in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties.

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