

**American Civil Liberties Union
Center for Responsible Lending
The David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Family Equality Council
Human Rights Campaign
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
NAACP
NAACP Legal Defense & Education Fund, Inc.
National CAPACD
National Community Reinvestment Coalition
National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low income clients)
National Council of La Raza
National Fair Housing Alliance
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund
National Urban League
Poverty & Race Research Action Council**

September 21, 2011

The Honorable Jerrold Nadler
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Kerry
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: The Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) Act

Dear Congressman Nadler and Senator Kerry:

We, the undersigned housing and civil rights organizations, write to express our strong support for the Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) Act of 2011 and appreciate your working together. We applaud your insight and initiative. These long-needed changes to the Fair Housing Act will improve our neighborhoods and expand important civil rights to so many people who are currently left out.

Today, federal civil rights laws do not protect all people, and leave the door open for unscrupulous and bigoted people to deny housing choice to people based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, source of income, or marital status. Such denials or discriminatory acts would be illegal if they occurred on a number of other bases, including race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, or disability.

The HOME Act would outlaw this discrimination by necessarily updating the Fair Housing Act. By extending the protections of the federal Fair Housing Act to individuals regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, or source of income, the HOME Act takes a major step to ensuring that all Americans have equal access to home lending, the home rental market, and the home sales market.

This is the right thing to do. Limiting choices that are available to people who are discriminated against in the housing market not only violates fundamental tenants of equality and fairness that are important to all Americans, but can also have profound impacts on individuals' personal and economic safety and well-being. In the midst of the foreclosure crisis, we have also clearly seen the macroeconomic consequences of discrimination and segregation.

Thank you again. We look forward to working with you to advance this legislation. Please contact Deidre Swesnik from the National Fair Housing Alliance with any questions. She may be reached at (202) 898-1661 or dswesnik@nationalfairhousing.org.

Sincerely,

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