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## **NATIONAL FAIR HOUSING COMMISSION HONORS JACK KEMP**

WASHINGTON – The National Fair Housing Commission – sponsored by the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund, Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, Inc. and the National Fair Housing Alliance – released the statement below on news of the passing of the Honorable Jack Kemp.

The bipartisan Commission was co-chaired by former U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretaries Jack Kemp and Henry Cisneros and its commissioners included Pat Combs, former President of the National Association of Realtors; Okianer Christian Dark, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the Howard University College of Law; I. King Jordan, President-Emeritus of Gallaudet University; Myron Orfield, Professor at the University of Minnesota School of Law; and Gordon Quan, former Mayor Pro Tem and Chair of the Housing Committee for the City of Houston.

The Commission recently released a report detailing the state of fair housing – <http://www.nationalfairhousing.org/NationalCommission/tabid/2963/Default.aspx> – that drew from testimony from hundreds of housing experts, advocates, and individuals across the country.

Statement of the National Fair Housing Commission:

“The Honorable Jack Kemp was a passionate politician and star football player, a Republican presidential contender and vice presidential nominee, but it was as the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development during the administration of President George H. W. Bush that he made perhaps his greatest contribution to the nation.

He understood the potential of housing laws and their enforcement and it was his enterprise zone concept which encouraged businesses to return to cities, a key factor in the 1990s rebirth of urban areas. It was under his leadership that fair housing was first listed as a HUD priority.

Kemp noted in a column shortly after the election of Barak Obama to the Presidency that 2008 was not only historic in its presidential election but that it was also, fittingly, the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the nation's fair housing laws that had helped 'put an end to the blatant racism and prejudice ... in rental housing and homeownership opportunities.'

Fair housing was such an important part of Jack Kemp's legacy that in 2008 he served as co-chair-- along with the Honorable Henry Cisneros, another former Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development-- of the National Commission on Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity.

Together Kemp and his co-chair Henry Cisneros oversaw regional hearings in five cities across the nation that investigated the state of housing in the U.S. and the reasons behind continued segregation and discrimination in housing, lending, and insurance markets. Jack Kemp acknowledged the erosion of fair housing enforcement and wanted to put housing policy – and fair housing – back on the national agenda.

At the Commission's July 15, 2008 hearing in Chicago, Mr. Kemp noted, 'Today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we have an opportunity to get both parties on the side of the American people, on the side of that which we hold up as our own ideal: that equality of opportunity is the lodestar of this country.'

Jack Kemp was a real leader on fair housing, meeting his own definition of leadership: 'Real leadership is not just seeing the realities of what we are temporarily faced with, but seeing the possibilities and potential that can be realized by lifting up peoples' vision of what they can be.'

Jack Kemp saw the realities, but also the potential and benefits of fair housing for the entire nation.”

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