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Congressman Al Green Champions Equal Opportunity During a Hearing on His Housing Fairness Bill

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Jan 20, 2010 | Issues: [Housing](#)

(Washington, DC)--Today, the Committee on Financial Services, Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity, held a hearing on the Housing Fairness Act of 2009 (H.R. 476), which Congressman Al Green (TX-09) introduced in the House of Representatives in January of 2009.

The Housing Fairness Act addresses continuing housing discrimination in communities across the country and promotes equal housing opportunities for all Americans. The bill provides the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) with greater resources to enforce existing fair housing laws and to study housing discrimination as well as segregation in local communities. It also requires HUD to issue regulations to federal grantees that ensure government monies do not fund segregation and perpetuate discrimination.

"According to the National Fair Housing Alliance, there are more than four million violations of fair housing laws that go unreported every year. Only a small percentage are reported to federal, state, and local governments and Fair Housing Initiatives Program agencies that investigate housing discrimination complaints. We must and can do more to ensure equal housing opportunities for everyone," said Congressman Al Green in his opening remarks.

Congressman Al Green noted that housing discrimination against disabled people, people of color, and families with children or single parents comprise the majority of housing discrimination cases reported to HUD. In this respect, the Congressman stated that "some property owners continue to deny people the opportunity to rent because they are disabled. There are cases prosecuted by the federal government in which apartment owners have increased rents for having children. This is in outright violation of our nation's laws."

Representatives from HUD and national fair housing organizations testifying in the hearing voiced their strong support of Congressman Al Green's legislation. "H.R. 476 is consistent with the priority the Department places on fair housing enforcement and enables us to do more than we can today," said John Trasviña, Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity.

Recognizing the importance of this week's holiday honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Congressman Al Green concluded his participation in the hearing by stating "Dr. King did not want to manage discrimination and segregation, he wanted to eliminate it. Today, the question before Congress is whether we want to manage housing discrimination—as we do now—or whether we want to eliminate it."

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