



PVA

**PARALYZED VETERANS
OF AMERICA**
Chartered by the Congress
of the United States

JUN 21 1988

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June 20, 1988

The Honorable Walter E. Fauntroy
U.S. House of Representatives
2135 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Fauntroy:

This week you will be asked to vote on amendments to the Fair Housing Act of 1968, H.R.1158. Currently the 1968 act bans discrimination in the sale or rental of housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. H.R.1158 will add two new categories of persons to the list of those who need protection from discrimination in today's housing market: families with children, and of particular interest to us, people with disabilities. It will also strengthen and improve the enforcement mechanisms available within the existing system.

As an organization whose membership is comprised of severely disabled, mobility-impaired veterans, the Paralyzed Veterans of America asks that you vote in favor of H.R.1158. This Act, as reported out of the House Judiciary Committee on April 27, 1988 by a vote of 26-9, will protect the interests of people with disabilities. We also ask that you support the package of clarifying amendments to be proposed on the House floor by the Ranking Minority Member of the Judiciary Committee, Representative Hamilton Fish. Congressman Fish has contributed significant comments to refine H.R.1158 since its emergence from the Committee. His efforts, coupled with the efforts of the bill's chief sponsor Congressman Don Edwards, have improved the amendments to the Fair Housing Act so that it is much deserving of your support.

PVA has long been an advocate for accessible housing. We have also been in the forefront of breaking down the physical and psychological barriers that preclude individuals with mobility-impairments from living, working, and participating in the mainstream of American life. H.R.1158 is extremely important to us because it protects people with disabilities from discriminatory housing practices and, prohibits the building of inaccessible multi-family housing in the future.

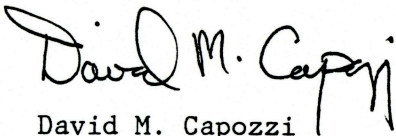
This last provision is very significant to PVA not only because federally funded housing programs have been drastically cutback in recent years, but because subsidized housing does not necessarily mean fair housing. It also

does not assure people with disabilities the freedom to choose the type or the location of housing they wish to rent or purchase. H.R.1158 corrects these inequities. It does so without imposing any undue financial hardship on home builders or developers. The requirements for accessibility do not become effective until 30 months after this bill becomes law. This enables all the necessary modifications to occur at the architect's drawing board rather than at a contractor's partially finished or completed housing site designed to accommodate four or more families.

The 1968 Fair Housing Act is now 20 years old. The proposed revisions, as contained in H.R.1158, have been the subject of debate for almost 8 years. Incidents of housing discrimination continue to rise unabated while more and more Americans find themselves either outside the protection of the law or homeless. PVA strongly believes the time has come for a change in the housing laws to ensure fair housing for all in America.

Therefore, we urge you to support H.R.1158, the "Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988", when it comes up for debate on the House floor. Since the bill will be debated under an open rule, we hope you will support Congressman Fish's comprehensive, clarifying amendments and oppose all other amendments that will weaken or alter the intent of this essential legislation.

Sincerely yours,



David M. Capozzi
National Advocacy Director

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