



STATE OF MICHIGAN

GRETCHEN WHITMER, Governor

MICHIGAN CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF LEGISLATION PROHIBITING INCOME DISCRIMINATION IN HOUSING

WHEREAS the Michigan Civil Rights Commission is a public body established under the power “to investigate alleged discrimination against any person because of religion, race, color or national origin in the enjoyment of the civil rights guaranteed by law and by [the] constitution, and to secure the equal protection of such civil rights without such discrimination”; and

WHEREAS affordable and decent shelter in the form of housing serves, at a minimum, as a foundation for the enjoyment of life, an essential means of protection and safety, a vital component to the prosperity of a community and an opportunity for individuals and families to escape the burdens of poverty; and

WHEREAS a significant number of potential and actual renters nationwide, and specifically in the state of Michigan, rely on various forms of assistance, including federal Section 8 housing vouchers, child support, veteran benefits, Social Security, unemployment benefits, disability benefits, child support or other forms of rental assistance; and

WHEREAS the use of housing vouchers allows individuals and families to move from racially segregated, high poverty neighborhoods, which individuals and families, studies have shown, are more likely to experience substandard employment, educational and health outcomes compared to families living in integrated neighborhoods that provided more opportunities; and

WHEREAS there exist well documented and prevalent cases of source of income discrimination against individuals seeking rental housing; and

WHEREAS the issue of source of income discrimination in housing is a well-documented phenomenon that has been widely researched and publicized, including by the *Poverty and Race Research Action Council* which has systematically and comprehensively prepared and updated in September 2024, what it describes as “*a compilation of state, local, and federal statutes prohibiting discrimination in the housing market based on source of income, along with an annotated bibliography of studies and published articles relating to discrimination against families with federal Housing Choice Vouchers*”; and

WHEREAS several reputable advocacy organizations have recommended the adoption of legislation to address source of income discrimination in rental housing, including the American Bar Association, who in August of 2017 passed a resolution “urg[ing] federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial governments to enact legislation prohibiting discrimination in housing on the basis of lawful source of income”, with an accompanying report highlighting the significant impact of source of income discrimination on families seeking to use Housing Choice Voucher to escape racially segregated, high poverty neighborhoods and recognizing “the human right to adequate housing for all”; and

WHEREAS while properties financed with Low Income Housing Tax Credits are required to accept vouchers as a source of income there are no comprehensive federal law prohibiting source of income discrimination and state housing agencies remain responsible for monitoring Low Income Housing Tax Credits property owners for compliance; and

WHEREAS several states and local units of government have addressed this unfortunate and devastating form of housing discrimination through enactment of

legislation and ordinances prohibiting landlords from discriminating against renters based on source of income; and

WHEREAS several Michigan local governments provide some form of source of income protection, including for example Ann Arbor, East Lansing, Ferndale, Grand Rapids, Hazel Park, Holland, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Kentwood, Lansing, Oak Park, Royal Oak Township, and Wyoming; and

WHEREAS the Michigan Elliott Larsen Civil Rights Act and the Michigan Persons with Disabilities Civil Rights Act currently prohibit housing discrimination against specific protected classifications other than source of income; and

WHEREAS the Michigan Legislature has proposed legislation that proscribes housing discrimination based on a current or prospective tenant's source of income, under conditions set forth in Senate Bill 205, 206 and 207 and companion House Bills 4062 and 4063; and

WHEREAS Senate Bill 207 and House Bill 4063, specifically amend the Elliott Larsen Civil Rights Act to prohibit landlords with five or more rental units from discriminating against prospective or current tenants based on their source of income, under circumstances set forth in the proposed legislation; and

WHEREAS the Michigan Civil Rights Commission convened Fair Housing Hearings on November 8, 2023 in the city of Detroit, February 7, 2024 virtually, March 16, 2024 in the city of Flint and April 28, 2024 in the city of Grand Rapids, and a Fair Housing Summit on June 12, 2024 in the City of Detroit, during which events the Michigan Civil Rights Commission and Michigan Department of Civil Rights received several public comments from citizens across the state highlighting the negative impact of source of income discrimination in rental housing on low-income individuals and person with disabilities within the state of Michigan; and

WHEREAS the Michigan Civil Rights Commission supports all responsible legislative and executive efforts to address source of income discrimination against prospective and current renters; and

WHEREAS the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, in observation of and in deference to its constitutional mandate, embraces all legislative attempts to secure the

protections and facilitate the expansion of the civil rights of Michigan citizens with respect to housing; and

THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED that the Michigan Civil Rights Commission hereby supports and recommends passage of all reasonable and responsible legislation prohibiting discrimination against current or prospective renters based on their source of income and urges the Michigan legislature to continue its vigilance in the protection, facilitation, and expansion of civil rights of the citizens of Michigan; and

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this resolution be provided to the Sponsors of the aforementioned proposed legislation, Speaker of the House, Speaker Pro Tempore, Majority and Minority Leaders of the Michigan House of Representatives, Senate President, President Pro Tempore, Majority and Minority Leaders of the Michigan Senate, and Governor Gretchen Whitmer.



Passed on Monday the 21ST day of October 2024, by the
MICHIGAN CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

Commissioner Gloria E. Lara, Chair
Commissioner Luke Londo, Secretary
Commissioner Zenna Faraj Elhasan
Commissioner Richard J. Corriveau

Commissioner David Worthams, Vice-Chair
Commissioner Portia Roberson
Commissioner Rosann Barker