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CITY/COUNTY COUNCIL SET TO VOTE ON HISTORIC SOURCE OF INCOME LEGISLATION

INDIANAPOLIS – Tonight, the Indianapolis/Marion County City/County Council will vote on Proposal 215, which would add source of income as a protected class to the City/County Human Relations Ordinance. If passed, it would be unlawful for housing providers to deny a prospective tenant solely because he or she receives rental assistance such as a Housing Choice Voucher or subsidy from a nonprofit agency such as domestic violence survivors' organizations or independent living centers.

"Rental subsidies and housing assistance exist to help people in poverty choose where to live to increase their access to employment, transportation, healthcare, and good schools," stated Amy Nelson, Executive Director of the Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana (FHCCI). "The discrimination faced by Indianapolis residents who use rental assistance segregates them into neighborhoods that don't provide these resources, creating a cycle of low opportunity that is difficult to overcome."

In November 2014, the FHCCI released a first of its kind report in Indiana identifying the rate of refusal for those using housing choice vouchers (formerly called Section 8), a form of source of income which would be protected under Proposal 215. The FHCCI found that in over 80% of situations, a Section 8 recipient was refused housing by an apartment complex or landlord for no reason other than their voucher. In predominantly white areas of Indianapolis, the refusal rate was a staggering 90%.

"Nothing in this proposal would stop landlords from being able to conduct their routine background checks and nothing would impede a housing provider from enforcing their rules and policies," continued Nelson. "Housing providers are simply choosing to perpetuate stereotypes about these tenants, putting them at risk of homelessness. The FHCCI joins community members and nonprofit agencies around the city in urging the City/County Council to vote in favor of Proposal 215 to protect low-income housing seekers and assist in expanding their housing options to address conditions of poverty."

Similar proposals have been passed in 13 states and over 30 local jurisdictions to address this form of harmful housing discrimination. For more information on fair housing or enforcing fair housing rights, contact the FHCCI or visit www.fhcci.org. To read the Section 8 Testing Audit report, visit <http://www.fhcci.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/11-11-14-Section-8-Report.pdf>. To learn more about Proposal 215, please visit <http://www.indy.gov/eGov/Council/Proposals/Documents/2014/PROP14-215.pdf>.

The Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana (FHCCI) is a private, nonprofit fair housing organization founded in 2011 and based in Indianapolis, Indiana. Its mission is to ensure equal housing opportunities by eliminating housing discrimination through advocacy, enforcement, education and outreach. More information on the FHCCI is at: www.fhcci.org