



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – MARCH 31, 2015

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### **INDIANA SENATE SET TO VOTE ON HB 1300 RESTRICTING HOUSING CHOICE FOR LOW-INCOME HOOSIERS**

INDIANAPOLIS – Any day now, the Indiana Senate will vote on [HB 1300](#), which would restrict the ability of Indiana cities and counties to add or enforce source of income housing discrimination protections under their City/County Human Relations Ordinances. If passed, it would significantly impact the ability of cities and counties with affordable housing limitations to ensure safe, affordable housing options for those of lower incomes. HB 1300 has passed the Indiana House and recently passed out of the Senate Local Government Committee as “Do Pass” on a party-line vote. The Fair Housing Center of Central (FHCCI) urges a “Do Not Pass” on HB 1300.

HB 1300 is a clear response by the housing industry to stop dialogue occurring in Indianapolis/Marion County on Proposal 215 which would make it unlawful for housing providers to deny a prospective tenant *solely* because he or she receives rental assistance such as a Housing Choice Voucher, VASH voucher, or subsidy from a nonprofit agency such as domestic violence survivors’ organizations or independent living centers. There have been five hearings at the Indianapolis/Marion County City/County level debating this important local topic.

Proposal 215 would still have allowed housing providers to conduct their routine reference and background checks conducted on all renters to ensure renters who paid their rent on time and abided lease requirements. The ordinance simply would not have allowed a housing provider to reject an applicant, who otherwise met their requirements, solely due to their receipt of a form of lawful income. In addition, nothing in the ordinance would limit a housing provider’s ability to determine rental rates for their units.

“We do not need the Indiana Legislature passing more laws which allow for discrimination to continue and fester. 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 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%. This is a currently *lawful* form of housing discrimination.

“What may be needed in Indianapolis, may not be needed in another Indiana city or county. It is critical

that localities be allowed to continued valuable dialogue on this important issue and decide what is best needed for their constituents. The FHCCI joins community members and nonprofit agencies around the state in urging the Indiana Senate vote ‘Do Not Pass’ on HB 1300,” continued Nelson.

To read FHCCI’s Senate testimony on HB 1300, visit <http://www.fhcci.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/FHCCI-HB-1300-Senate-Testimony.pdf>

To review the FHCCI’s 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>

For more information on fair housing or enforcing fair housing rights, contact the FHCCI or visit [www.fhcci.org](http://www.fhcci.org).

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*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](http://www.fhcci.org)*