



For Immediate Release – March 31, 2015

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**FAIR HOUSING CENTER OF CENTRAL INDIANA
URGES SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY
BE ADDED TO INDIANA CIVIL RIGHTS PROTECTIONS**

INDIANAPOLIS – The Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana (FHCCI) urges the Indiana General Assembly to immediately amend Indiana civil rights laws to protect lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Hoosiers from discrimination.

“While several Indiana cities have made great strides in ensuring equality for LGBT residents, there is a serious risk of backsliding at the state level,” stated Amy Nelson, Executive Director of FHCCI. “It is still perfectly lawful in Indiana to fire or evict someone because of their sexual orientation, and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) threatens to deny services to any LGBT customer if a business so chooses and overrides any local LGBT civil rights or housing protections under city/county human relations ordinances. The only way to secure an inclusive and equal society for our LGBT relatives, friends, and neighbors is to add sexual orientation and gender identity/expression as protected classes to Indiana civil rights and fair housing laws.”

Currently, it is unlawful under the Indiana Fair Housing Law to discriminate in a housing transaction on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, disability, gender, and/or familial status. Other civil rights laws extend protection on the bases of age and marital status at the federal level. While certain Indiana localities, including Indianapolis, have put in place human relations ordinances that forbid discrimination in housing, employment, and/or public accommodations on the bases of sexual orientation and/or gender identity, these ordinances often lack strong enforcement processes and are frequently not equal to state and federal protections. This leaves victims of discrimination with little recourse when they have been denied housing or employment.

“The public response to RFRA has shown us that Hoosiers want their laws to reflect their values of fairness, opportunity, and inclusion,” continued Nelson. “Hoosiers will not tolerate LGBT discrimination, no matter how it is cloaked. It’s time for our legislators to acknowledge that what the people of Indiana want is sexual orientation and gender identity protected by law throughout the state. We urge Indiana to join the more than 20 other states in adding this needed civil rights protection.”

The Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana (FHCCI) is a private, non-profit fair housing organization founded in 2011 and based in Indianapolis, IN. Its mission is to ensure equal

housing opportunities by eliminating housing discrimination through advocacy, enforcement, education and outreach. For more information, visit fhcci.org