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January 11, 2018

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

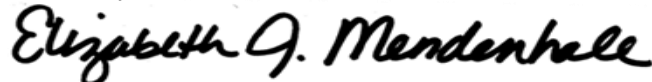
The 1.3 million members of the National Association of REALTORS® urge your support for H.R. 1447, the “Fair and Equal Housing Act,” introduced by Representatives Taylor (R-VA) and Schneider (D-IL), which will protect Americans from housing discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The real estate industry strongly supports equal housing opportunity. 2018 is the 50th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act, and this legislation will properly update the law. The National Association of REALTORS® updated our Code of Ethics in 2009 and 2013 to prohibit REALTORS® from discriminating based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and the Association strongly supports this bill.

A person’s sexual orientation and gender identity has no bearing on their ability to fulfill their obligations when purchasing a home or renting an apartment. Support for LGBT equality in housing is widespread. According to a 2016 study by Better Homes and Garden Real Estate, 65 percent of millennials and 55 percent of millennials living in rural areas support LGBT equality. Nationally, 22 states offer some form of fair housing protection based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity. This patchwork of laws can inhibit sales and purchases by families moving across state lines.

Despite progress, discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity still exists. A 2007 study in Michigan revealed discrimination based on sexual orientation in 25 percent of rental tests and 25 percent of mortgage finance tests. A 2016 study in northeast Ohio showed a 30 – 35 percent rate of discrimination in rentals based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

This bill is a straightforward addition to Fair Housing laws that continues bipartisan cooperation in protecting Americans from housing discrimination. In addition, mechanisms for enforcing the Fair Housing Act will not change with this bill. As NAR and our nation commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act, NAR asks you to cosponsor H.R. 1447, “The Fair Housing and Equal Housing Act”, and move this legislation forward.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Mendenhall
2018 President, National Association of REALTORS®

