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## **GOVERNOR DECLARES APRIL 'FAIR HOUSING MONTH' Oregon's New Labor Commissioner reaches out to Fair Housing advocates**

Before leaving for his European trade mission, the Governor signed a proclamation declaring April "Fair Housing Month" here in Oregon. This proclamation comes on the heels of the passage of Senate Bill 725 and House Bill 3639 which brought Oregon back in line with federal fair housing laws.

This change in Oregon's law means fair housing investigations can now be filed, investigated and resolved right here in Oregon.

In 1982 the state of Oregon began performing fair housing investigations under contract for the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). However, when federal fair housing laws changed in 1989, Oregon's statutes were no longer in synch with (or "substantially equivalent" to) HUD regulations. Three years later, Oregon lost its HUD contract.

Since that time ALL housing discrimination claims based on federal fair housing laws have been routed to the HUD regional office in Seattle, with some of these cases taking upwards of 2 to 3 years to be resolved.

In the 2007 session Senator Margaret Carter (D) sponsored Senate Bill 725 which made major strides in bringing Oregon's law back in line with the federal fair housing laws. The bill passed both houses with an overwhelming majority, 43-14 in the House and 24-4 in the Senate. During the last special legislative session a companion bill, House Bill 3639, made the final tweaks necessary to bring Oregon into line with federal fair housing laws.

As one of his final acts as Oregon's outgoing Labor Commissioner Dan Gardner signed the final certification paperwork with HUD's legal counsel. "This is a great day for the state of Oregon," said Gardner, "after too many years Oregonians can once again rest assured that their fair housing claims will get the attention they deserve."

Incoming Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian, whose swearing ceremony will be held on April 8<sup>th</sup>, said, "I am proud to be the first Labor Commissioner in 15 years to oversee fair housing investigations right here in Oregon. I look forward to working with the advocates from both the landlord-tenant coalition and the Fair Housing Council as we move forward."

April 16 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary that Title VIII (the Federal Fair Housing Act) of the 1968 Civil Rights Act was signed into law by President Johnson. There will be a local celebration on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April hosted by the Fair Housing Council of Oregon at the Ambridge Event Center in Northeast Portland.

The Governor signed the proclamation in recognition of the anniversary of the Federal Fair Housing Act and as a nod of gratitude for the recent efforts of dedicated housing advocates on both sides of the aisle.

*For more information on the Fair Housing Council of Oregon celebration contact (503) 412-6000.  
For information on fair housing complaints contact the Bureau of Labor and Industries at (971) 673 0761.*

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