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Oregon Realtors Celebrate Fair Housing Month

Salem, Oregon – April marks the 44th anniversary of the national Fair Housing Act. The law, passed by Congress in 1968 and signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson, is designed to ensure equal housing opportunities for all Americans.

Oregon Realtors are dedicated to making sure all Oregonians have resources and information about their rights and responsibilities under the act.

The Fair Housing Act (Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968) introduced meaningful federal enforcement mechanisms. It made it illegal to discriminate in housing transactions based on race, color, national origin, religion, gender, disability, or national origin.

"So much has changed since the Fair Housing Act became law. Our country is more diverse than it's ever been. These changes have brought new challenges as we continue our fight to address inequality in housing," said John Hoops, 2012 OAR President. "We are more technologically advanced today and we intend to utilize the best tools available to fight housing discrimination."

The sale and purchase of a home is one of the most significant events any person will experience in his or her lifetime. But it is more than a simple transaction. It often represents the fulfillment of a dream.

"Discrimination is never acceptable," said Hoops. "The Fair Housing Act helped open doors for everyone in this country whose goal it is to own a home."

The Fair Housing Act applies to virtually everyone involved in a real estate transaction; the seller, the buyer and the real estate professional all have rights and responsibilities under the law.

Sellers and landlords are prohibited from discriminating when selling or renting a property. Home buyers are guaranteed by the law that housing will be available without discrimination or other limitations. And real estate professionals are prohibited discriminating on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, or national origin.

Even without the federal law, Realtors are bound by Article 10 of the NAR Code of Ethics, which provides that "Realtors shall not deny equal professional services to any person for reasons of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status or national origin. Realtors shall not be a party to any plan or agreement to discriminate against a person or persons on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status or national origin. Realtors, in their real estate employment practices, shall not discriminate against any person or persons on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status or national origin."

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The Oregon Association of REALTORS® was established in 1932 to organize the real estate profession in Oregon. Today, the Association is a force for education and a business and legislative advocate for free enterprise and private property rights in Oregon.