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**HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FAIR HOUSING: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS**

*H-GAC Reminds Area Residents to Stay Informed on Fair Housing Act*

**Houston, TX** -- The Houston-Galveston Area Council recognizes April as Fair Housing Month and reminds homebuyers and renters to be aware of their rights under the Fair Housing Act.

More than 50 years ago, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1968 into law prohibiting discrimination in housing. The Fair Housing Act (Title VIII of that law) prohibits discrimination in housing because of race or color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, or disability. The Act applies to rental properties, properties for sale, and mortgage lending.

**What does this mean?**

Real estate advertisements may not exclude anyone protected by the Fair Housing Act. Sellers or landlords should make homes available, negotiate prices, and provide the same services for everyone listed in the Fair Housing Act. Mortgage lenders are required to follow the law when making loans, setting repayment terms, and appraising property. Fair housing rights ensure people can exercise their right to fair housing without threats, coercion, or intimidation.

Additional information regarding the Fair Housing Act can be found on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) website at [www.hud.gov/fairhousing](http://www.hud.gov/fairhousing). People who feel their rights have been violated should file complaints with HUD. While complainants have up to one year to report the alleged violation, HUD recommends filing the complaint sooner to expedite the process.

**Houston-Galveston Area Council**

H-GAC is a voluntary association of local governments and local elected officials from the 13-county Gulf Coast planning region, which includes an area of 12,500 square miles and more than 7 million people. H-GAC works to promote efficient and accountable use of local, state, and federal tax dollars; serves as a problem-solving and information forum for local governments; and helps analyze trends and conditions affecting the region. For more information, visit [h-gac.com](http://h-gac.com).

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