

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 8, 2022

CONTACT: Abdi Maya, Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance, 312-588-9170, amaya@cafha.net



Ford and Villivalam pass state bill to end source of income housing discrimination

SPRINGFIELD – To make housing more accessible to families with nonwage income, State Representative LaShawn Ford and State Senator Ram Villivalam passed legislation to prevent housing providers from discriminating against a prospective applicant's source of income.

"Source of income fair housing protections will have a major positive impact on ensuring a more just and equitable housing market across our state, as well as addressing systemic racial and economic segregation," Ford said.

House Bill 2775 adds "source of income" to the Illinois Human Rights Act's protections against discrimination in real estate transactions, making it a civil rights violation to refuse to consider an individual for housing solely based on their source of income. Over half of Illinois households have been susceptible to source of income discrimination because they earn non-wage income, such as social security, retirement income and public assistance. In addition, about 99,000 households who use Housing Choice Vouchers to pay their rent often experience source of income discrimination.

"No one should be denied housing when they have the means to make the rent," Villivalam said. "Too often, individuals on government assistance, single mothers receiving child support or seniors on fixed incomes are turned away solely based on where they receive their income each month."

Sharon Norwood helped advocate for the legislation based on her own past struggles to rent a home using a Housing Choice Voucher.

"Having statewide source of income protections will help people avoid what happened to me. I had to give up my voucher, because I could not find a landlord to rent to me in the community I wanted my family to live in," Norwood said. "Once I gave up my voucher, I did find a landlord who rented to me, but I was paying a lot more rent than I could afford because of it."

The legislation was advocated for by the Illinois Coalition for Fair Housing, which has more than 130 organizational members, including Access Living, Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Housing Action Illinois, HOPE Fair Housing Center, Housing Choice Partners, Illinois Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC-IL), Northside Community Resources, Shriver Center on Poverty Law and Working Family Solidarity. Background information and a list of all coalition members are available at <https://www.housingchoicepartners.org/soi-campaign>.

"For far too long our neighbors utilizing Housing Choice Vouchers to help pay for their rent had to endure the disrespect caused by source of income discrimination and the resulting exclusion from the communities that were always theirs. Today the State of Illinois said 'no more,'" said Michael Chavarria, Executive Director of the HOPE Fair Housing Center.

Passage of HB 2775 brings Illinois in line with the 19 other states across the country that have similar laws. In Illinois, Chicago, Cook County, Naperville and Urbana already have source of income fair housing ordinances.

The coalition that advocated for passage of the bill urges Governor Pritzker to sign the bill into law as soon as possible.

###