



FAIR HOUSING NEWS

A newsletter about fair housing, community development, & neighborhood quality of life

GREETINGS!

Welcome to this edition of *Fair Housing News!* - a newsletter produced by the GBCHRB as a public service. Contact us for a free copy of any article or if you would like this regularly e-mailed to you: 410-453-9500 / 800-895-6302 / mail@gbchr.org. More info/resources: <http://www.gbchr.org>.



NATIONAL NEWS

In Fair Housing News.....

The National Fair Housing Alliance Issued Its 2008 Fair Housing Trends Report - and Found that Discrimination is Rising. The study found more than 3.7 million instances of discrimination each year against African-Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and American Indians in rental and sales markets - this estimate is extremely conservative because it does not reflect discrimination against persons with disabilities - the group that files the highest number of complaints with HUD - nor discrimination on the basis of religion, sex, color, familial status or other ethnicities. It also does not reflect discrimination in lending, insurance, planning, and zoning or racial and sexual harassment. The number does not include instances of linguistic profiling (discrimination on the telephone), discrimination via the internet, or discrimination when applications are filed or when people already occupy a residence. Resultingly, the report estimates the annual incidence of discrimination to exceed four million.

In 2007, there were 27,023 housing discrimination complaints, representing less than 1% of the incidence of discrimination, a number fairly consistent over the past five years. Private Fair Housing organizations process over 60% of the complaints, despite over 25 organizations recently have closed or been on the brink of closing and survive with drastic reduction in staff. Testing programs have documented extensive and systemic patterns of discrimination in rental, real estate sales, mortgage lending, and homeowners insurance markets. The majority of complaints concern rental housing practices, as discrimination in real estate, mortgage lending,

and homeowners insurance transactions are difficult for home seekers to identify and few private agencies have staff to address these complex areas. Recommendations include: an independent Fair Housing enforcement agency, additional funding for Fair Housing education and enforcement programs, improved HUD and DOJ case processing, regulatory changes to address unfair and predatory lending practices, and a better process of implementing recovery efforts in the Gulf Coast. (<http://www.nationalfairhousing.org/Home/tabid/2510/Default.aspx>; National Fair Housing Alliance, April 8, 2008)



The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) - a Non-Sectarian Non-Partisan, Grassroots Arab-American Civil Rights Organization - Urges Congress To Pass The End Racial Profiling Act (ERPA) This Year. (To read the text of both bills, click on their bill numbers [S 2481](#) and [HR 4611](#).)

Racial profiling occurs when law enforcement relies on race, ethnicity, national origin, or religion in selecting which individuals to subject to routine or spontaneous investigatory activities, except when using a specific suspect description. Whether used as a tool in the war against drugs or the war against terrorism, the ADC believes profiling "fuels the perception in minority communities that the criminal justice system is unfair and undermines the trust between the police and the communities they serve." The End Racial Profiling Act builds on the 2003 guidance issued by the Department of Justice banning federal law enforcement officials from racial profiling. ERPA would apply this prohibition to state and local law enforcement, close loopholes, include a mechanism for enforcement of the new policy, require data collection to monitor progress toward eliminating profiling, and provide best practice incentive grants to state and local law enforcement to enable agencies to comply with the requirements of the bill.

(<http://capwiz.com/adc/issues/alert/?alertid=10815336>)

California Court Strikes Down Same-Sex Marriage Ban. The California Supreme Court struck down the State's ban on same-sex marriage, ruling that civil unions are not a legally adequate substitution for marriage. ([State of Civil Unions: California Court Strikes Down Marriage Ban - Brookings Institution](#); May 20, 2008, *The New Republic*)

Report to the U. N. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Finds Continuing Residential Segregation & Housing Discrimination in the US.

The study found "Residential segregation is an insidious and persistent fact of American life. Discrimination on the basis of race, while on the decline according to some estimates, continues to pervade nearly every aspect of the housing market in the United States." This report evaluates the current state of housing discrimination and segregation and the government's failure to fulfill its obligations related to housing under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination ("CERD"). The report states that: (1) historically, policies and practices of the federal, state, and local governments have helped to create highly segregated residential patterns; (2) many current governmental programs and policies continue to perpetuate segregation and concentrate poverty in communities of color, albeit without the explicit design of earlier programs; e.g., family public housing is highly segregated and predominantly located in areas of concentrated poverty; and (3) since 2001, the federal government has implemented policy changes and budget cuts that have restricted affordable housing choice and mobility.



<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/HRW/4e39fffc4ceefceae029277441393fd.htm>)



Mortgage Lending News.....

New Research From the Brookings Institution & First Focus Shows That Nearly Two Million Children Will Be Directly Impacted by the Mortgage Crisis. According to the study, when forced from their homes, "children's education is disrupted, their peer relationships crumble, and the social networks that support them are fractured." The Center for Responsible Lending projects

that 20% of subprime mortgages originated in the past two years will go into foreclosure, affecting 1.95 million children and youth who are losing their homes, ranging from 1,000 children in North Dakota to 311,900 children in California. This estimate is likely low because it does not include those children being evicted from rental units that are going into default, nor does it include children whose parents default on conventional loans.

http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2008/04_mortgage_crisis_isaacs.aspx)

Report Finds Subprime Borrowers Needlessly Overpaid for Brokered Mortgages: Same Borrower Qualifications, Same Loan, But Very Different Prices. [\(Read the report\)](#) New research by the Center for Responsible

Lending found subprime borrowers with brokered loans pay significantly more than their counterparts who deal directly with lenders. In the first four years of a mortgage, a typical subprime borrower who has gone through a broker pays \$5,222 more than if he or she obtains the loan directly from a lender. The research - the first to empirically examine the effect of broker compensation on a broad spectrum of borrowers - also discovered that borrowers with weak credit have brokered mortgages carrying higher interest rates than the same loans obtained directly from a retail lender. On a typical loan of \$166,000, a subprime borrower with a brokered mortgage will pay \$5,222 more in the first four years of the loan. Over the 30-year span of a loan, the cost difference grows to almost \$36,000. The research also shows that people with better credit tend to receive comparable loan prices whether they go through a broker or directly to a retail lender. Borrowers with very high credit scores can fare better by going through a broker, usually on mortgages with fixed rates, the type of loan that has been scarce in the subprime market. Kickbacks from lenders - known as "yield spread premiums" - give brokers a strong financial incentive to steer borrowers into overpriced products. A lack of transparency and the complexity of the loans in the subprime market make it all but impossible for consumers to know if they are being overcharged.



Recommendations include: (1) ban practices that give brokers an incentive to overcharge subprime borrowers, (2) ensure that lenders take responsibility for brokered loans made in their name, and (3) set standards requiring brokers to serve customers' interests. CRL based its research on an analysis of 1.7 million mortgages made between 2004 and 2006 to borrowers. (Center for Responsible Lending, April 8, 2008; <http://www.responsiblelending.org/index.html>)



A Recent [Policy](#) Change by the Mortgage Industry To Charge Higher Fees For Loans To Borrowers in Some Zip Codes Has Quickly Led To [Charges](#) Of Redlining & Violations Of Fair Housing Laws. In response, mortgage giant

Fannie Mae just announced it would no longer assess loan risks by using a "[declining markets designation](#)," that is, borrowers in some areas would pay more for loans because their communities have a higher rate of foreclosures, short sales, and falling home values. Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, other lenders, and private insurers have been using the designation for a few months as part of their automated underwriting systems. In some cases, a borrower doesn't know whether he resides in such a market until he applies for the loan. (<http://www.washingtonindependent.com/view/reconsidering>, May 15, 2008)



In Maryland

Governor O'Malley Signs House Bill 83 Creating American Indian Heritage Day as an Official State Holiday in Maryland. Members of Maryland Indian tribes, some in native dress, stood behind Gov. Martin O'Malley as he signed a bill designating the Friday after Thanksgiving as American Indian Heritage Day, a new State Holiday. "Given the contributions and rich history of Native

Americans to the fabric of our society, I thought it was only fitting to designate the day after Thanksgiving as American Indian Heritage Day," said bill sponsor Talmadge Branch (D-Baltimore). The day already is a holiday for state employees, even though it did not have a name. The first American Indian Day was declared on the second Saturday in May, 1916, by the Governor of New York. Several states have designated Columbus Day as Native American Day. Since 1995, U. S. Presidents annually have issued a proclamation designating the month of November as "National American Indian Heritage Month". Read the 2007 designation here: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/10/20071031-2.html> (<http://www.doi.gov/bia/na-month.pdf>; Baltimore *Examiner*, May 14, 2008)

The 425th Session of the Maryland General Assembly ended at midnight on Monday.

Equality Maryland acknowledges the "small but significant steps forward the LGBT community in Maryland has taken with passage of two domestic partner measures, while also expressing our disappointment that the General Assembly did not do more this year to alleviate discrimination faced by LGBT people and their families. Discrimination against transgender people is still legal, state employees are still not given equal benefits and our families remain unequal on far too many levels." [Click here](#) to read more about the legislative session from Equality Maryland.

The Maryland Religious Freedom And Civil Marriage Protection Act Was Introduced For The First Time With 7 Lead Sponsors and 42 Cosponsors – Nearly One Fourth Of The General Assembly.

House leaders did not take up the measure, and the bill never received a vote. The General Assembly approved two measures that were passed in 2005 but vetoed by Governor Ehrlich. Senate Bill 566, sponsored by Senator Robert Garagiola and cross-filed by Delegate James Hubbard, provides 11 protections to domestic partners. These include the right to visit one another in the hospital, share a room in a nursing home and to make funeral decisions for each other. Senate Bill 597, sponsored by Senator Rona Kramer and cross-filed by Delegate Anne Kaiser, adds "domestic partners" to the list of family members a person can add or remove from the deed of their home without paying recordation and transfer fees and taxes. The measures will go into effect on July 1, 2008. (<http://www.hrc.org/8704.htm>)





Renters Who Face Eviction In Baltimore Because Their Landlords Are In Foreclosure Would Be Notified and Have More Time To Move Under A Bill.

Officials in Mayor Sheila Dixon's administration, which sponsored the measure, said the bill would prevent tenants from being notified of a foreclosure for the first time when a sheriff's deputy arrives to evict them. The proposal was approved unanimously by a council committee and is expected to win full approval this year. As the rate of foreclosures has increased, such evictions have spiked: there were over 4,000 foreclosure filings in the City in 2007, according to the Law Department, and from first-quarter figures, the number will climb to 6,000 by the end of this year. Baltimore Neighborhoods, Inc., received calls from over 80 tenants statewide in January-April because their landlords were facing foreclosure, a 50% increase from last year, according to *The Sun*. The proposal requires tenants of foreclosed property to be notified by certified mail and first-class mail two weeks pre-eviction and requires that notice be posted on the property a week in advance. The legislation would also prohibit the new owner of the property from throwing tenants' belongings onto the street, requiring the owners to take the material to a landfill, donate it to charity, or have the tenant get it. (www.baltimoresun.com/news/local/baltimore_city/bal-md.foreclose21may21.0.2890867.story; *Baltimore Sun*, May 21, 2008)

Deadline for Public Comments Regarding the City's Inclusionary Housing Regulations is June 11, 2008.

According to the City notice: "These interim regulations are issued pursuant to the mandate and authority of Baltimore City Code, Article 13, Subtitle 2B, "Inclusionary Housing Requirements". Pursuant to Ordinance 07-474, proposed regulations governing Inclusionary Housing Requirements were released for public comment in October 2007. These proposed regulations generated numerous comments, the examination and consideration of which resulted in the draft interim regulations. As these interim regulations differ in places significantly from their predecessor, public review and comment is being requested a second time prior to their issuance. It is anticipated that the regulations, as amended based on consideration of comments received, will be in force by June 30, 2008. Comments to Steve Janes at: steve.janes@baltimorecity.gov or to Suite 1101, 417 E. Fayette Street, Baltimore, Maryland, 21202, 410-396-4051. (<http://www.baltimorehousing.org/index/EventDetail.asp?ID=287>)



CALENDAR

The National Fair Housing Alliance & the Leadership Conference On Civil Rights are Holding a Fair Housing Act 40th Anniversary Commemoration And Policy Conference on June 8-11, 2008.

The Conference will be at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill, 400 New Jersey Avenue, N. W., Washington, DC 20001. Contact NFHA at (202) 898-1661 or go to <http://nfha.objectwareinc.com/Portals/33/News%20Docs/conferenceregistration.pdf>.

Volunteers Needed! Be a Volunteer at the ACLU Membership Conference June 8-10 and Receive Complimentary Passes.

The ACLU is currently accepting applications for volunteers for all events leading up to and during the 2008 Membership Conference June 8-10 at the Washington, D. C. Convention Center. Volunteers will work in registration, office support,

guides, ushers, and runners. All volunteers must attend mandatory volunteer orientation session.

All volunteers are invited to attend the special Maryland Caucus reception Monday, June 9 from 5:30–6:30 p.m. hosted by Maryland ACLU's new constituents' action network - "Maryland ACLU CAN" - for all members and activists. Anyone or group interested in volunteering should contact Allison Sachs: 410-889-8550, ext. 117 or sachs@aclu-md.org. To register for the Conference: <http://www.aclu.org/conference/2008/>.

Free "Mortgage Matters" Workshops by Baltimore Housing and the Baltimore Homeownership Preservation Coalition on June 11, 25, July 2, 12, and 19. Info: 410-727-0169, ext. 1802.
(http://preservehomeownership.org/documents/bhpc_workshopflyerfinal.pdf)



DID YOU KNOW?

ACLU Launches New Blog of Rights! The ACLU has launched a new ACLU Blog of Rights. The first blog is an online symposium on torture and its implications for the nation. The ACLU Blog of Rights is envisioned as a marketplace of ideas and discourse on civil liberties issues. In light of newly-released Department of Justice (DOJ) memos authorizing abusive interrogation techniques, the admission by President Bush that he knew top officials were discussing and authorizing the use of torture by the C. I. A., and the much-anticipated DOJ Inspector General's report on the FBI's role in harsh interrogations of detainees in U.S. custody abroad, this week's inaugural symposium focused on what the use of torture means to the United States. For more info, go here: <http://blog.aclu.org/>.

An Excellent Resource Page for Consumers on Mortgage Lending & Payday Lending Issues is: <http://www.responsiblelending.org/consumers/>.

Contact the GBCHRB for FREE Fair Housing Info, Brochures, & Posters in English, Spanish, Korean, and Russian. We have brochures, Self-Help Guides to Fair Housing for individual counties, curricula for renting & buying housing, and much more! Quantities available for no charge! Contact us at: 410-453-9500 / 800-895-6302 / mail@gbchrb.org.

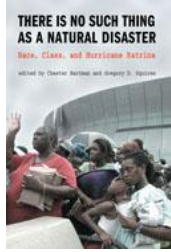
The GBCHRB's *Neighborhood Beat* TV Show Is on Cable Stations Across Maryland! Hosted by Dr. Bill Kladky, the 30-minute interview show runs in Baltimore City, the counties of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Howard, Calvert, St. Mary's, Talbot, Prince George's, and Montgomery, and the City of Takoma Park. Call 410-453-9500 for days and times - or for a copy of a show.



INTERESTING BOOKS

As we again enter hurricane season, let's pause for a moment to contemplate what Hurricane Katrina taught and didn't teach about race relations and

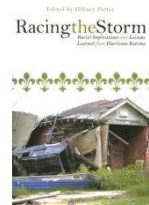
discrimination. The following are my favorite books about the storm and its impact - and its microscope - on our society.



There is No Such Thing as a Natural Disaster: Race, Class, and Hurricane Katrina, Chester Hartman & Gregory D. Squires, eds. Routledge, 2006. \$27.95 paper. A scholarly study of the social implications of the disaster, namely: (1) the impact of the hurricane was very uneven, and race, class, and poverty) were deeply implicated in the unevenness - "It was not by accident that the poorest and blackest neighborhoods were the ones that were buried under water;" (2) the response underscored the impoverishment of social policy (or what passes for it); (3) the state of urban and regional planning was revealed in stark detail.

Come Hell or High Water: Hurricane Katrina and the Color of Disaster by Michael Eric Dyson. New York: Basic, 2006. \$23.00 hardcover. The first major book to be released about Hurricane Katrina, Dyson shows what happened, and argues that the failure to offer timely aid to Katrina's victims indicates deeper problems in race and class relations.

Racing the Storm: Racial Implications and Lessons Learned from Hurricane Katrina by Hillary Potter. Lexington Books, 2007. \$29.95 paper. Issues of racial classification and identity are examined, with race's significance in public opinion, media, and government and volunteer response before, during, and after Katrina.



Breach of Faith: Hurricane Katrina and the Near Death of a Great American City by Jed Horne. Random House, 2006. \$25.95 hardcover. New Orleans *Times-Picayune* reporter chronicles the tragedy.



Disaster: Hurricane Katrina and the Failure of Homeland Security by Christopher Cooper and Robert Block. New York: Times Books, 2006. \$26.00 hardcover. From *Publishers Weekly*: "The fatal inundation of New Orleans was no natural disaster, argues this hard-hitting investigative report. Wall Street Journal reporters Cooper and Block finger two very man-made causes of the tragedy. The first was the decades-long failure of local officials and the Army Corps of Engineers to fix New Orleans' poorly

designed and constructed levees and floodwalls, which collapsed under moderate hurricane conditions. The second and more spectacular was the breakdown of the Federal Emergency Management Agency after its incorporation into the Department of Homeland Security, which cut FEMA's funding and authority and reoriented it toward the national obsession with terrorism."

The Great Deluge: Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans, and the Mississippi Gulf Coast by Douglas Brinkley. New York: Harper, 2006. \$17.95 paper. Historian Brinkley lets the survivors tell their own stories, recording the nightmare.

