

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1733

To authorize funds to prevent housing discrimination through the use of nationwide testing, to increase funds for the Fair Housing Initiatives Program, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 28, 2007

Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. BROWN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

A BILL

To authorize funds to prevent housing discrimination through the use of nationwide testing, to increase funds for the Fair Housing Initiatives Program, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Housing Fairness Act
5 of 2007”.

1 **SEC. 2. TESTING FOR DISCRIMINATION.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Housing and
3 Urban Development shall conduct a nationwide program
4 of testing to—

5 (1) detect and document differences in the
6 treatment of persons seeking to rent or purchase
7 housing or obtain or refinance a home mortgage
8 loan, and measure patterns of adverse treatment be-
9 cause of the race, color, religion, sex, familial status,
10 disability status, or national origin of a renter, home
11 buyer, or borrower; and

12 (2) measure the prevalence of such discrimina-
13 tory practices across the housing and mortgage lend-
14 ing markets as a whole.

15 (b) ADMINISTRATION.—The Secretary of Housing
16 and Urban Development shall enter into agreements with
17 qualified fair housing enforcement organizations, as such
18 organizations are defined under subsection (h) of section
19 561 of the Housing and Community Development Act of
20 1987 (42 U.S.C. 3616a(h)), for the purpose of conducting
21 the testing required under subsection (a).

22 (c) REPORT.—The Secretary of Housing and Urban
23 Development shall report to Congress—

24 (1) on a biennial basis, the results of each
25 round of testing required under subsection (a) along
26 with any recommendations or proposals for legisla-

1 tive or administrative action to address any issues
2 raised by such testing; and

3 (2) on an annual basis, a detailed summary of
4 the calls received by the Fair Housing Administra-
5 tion’s 24-hour toll-free telephone hotline.

6 (d) USE OF RESULTS.—The results of any testing re-
7 quired under subsection (a) may be used as the basis for
8 the Secretary, or any State or local government or agency,
9 public or private nonprofit organization or institution, or
10 other public or private entity that the Secretary has en-
11 tered into a contract or cooperative agreement with under
12 section 561 of the Housing and Community Development
13 Act of 1987 (42 U.S.C. 3616a) to commence, undertake,
14 or pursue any investigation or enforcement action to rem-
15 edy any discrimination uncovered as a result of such test-
16 ing.

17 (e) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section:

18 (1) DISABILITY STATUS.—The term “disability
19 status” has the same meaning given the term
20 “handicap” in section 802 of the Civil Rights Act of
21 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3602).

22 (2) FAMILIAL STATUS.—The term “familial sta-
23 tus” has the same meaning given that term in sec-
24 tion 802 of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C.
25 3602).

1 (f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
 2 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out the provi-
 3 sions of this section \$20,000,000 for fiscal year 2008 and
 4 each fiscal year thereafter.

5 **SEC. 3. INCREASE IN FUNDING FOR THE FAIR HOUSING INI-**
 6 **TIATIVES PROGRAM.**

7 Section 561 of the Housing and Community Develop-
 8 ment Act of 1987 (42 U.S.C. 3616a) is amended—

9 (1) in subsection (b)—

10 (A) in paragraph (1), by inserting “quali-
 11 fied” before “private nonprofit fair housing en-
 12 forcement organizations,”; and

13 (B) in paragraph (2), by inserting “quali-
 14 fied” before “private nonprofit fair housing en-
 15 forcement organizations,”;

16 (2) by striking subsection (g) and inserting the
 17 following:

18 “(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

19 “(1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be
 20 appropriated to carry out the provisions of this sec-
 21 tion \$52,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2008
 22 through 2012, of which—

23 “(A) not less than 75 percent of such
 24 amounts shall be for private enforcement initia-
 25 tives authorized under subsection (b);

1 “(B) not more than 10 percent of such
2 amounts shall be for education and outreach
3 programs under subsection (d); and

4 “(C) any remaining amounts shall be used
5 for program activities authorized under this sec-
6 tion.

7 “(2) AVAILABILITY.—Any amount appropriated
8 under this section shall remain available until ex-
9 pended.”;

10 (3) in subsection (h), in the matter following
11 subparagraph (C), by inserting “and meets the cri-
12 teria described in subparagraphs (A) and (C)” after
13 “subparagraph (B)”; and

14 (4) in subsection (d)—

15 (A) in paragraph (1)—

16 (i) in subparagraph (C), by striking “;
17 and” and inserting a semicolon;

18 (ii) in subparagraph (D), by striking
19 the period and inserting “; and”; and

20 (iii) by adding at the end the fol-
21 lowing new subparagraph:

22 “(E) websites and other media outlets.”;

23 (B) in paragraph (2), by striking “or other
24 public or private entities” and inserting “or
25 other public or private nonprofit entities”; and

1 (C) in paragraph (3), by striking “or other
2 public or private entities” and inserting “or
3 other public or private nonprofit entities”.

4 **SEC. 4. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

5 It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of
6 Housing and Urban Development should—

7 (1) fully comply with the requirements of sec-
8 tion 561(d) of the Housing and Community Develop-
9 ment Act of 1987 (42 U.S.C. 3616a(d)) to establish,
10 design, and maintain a national education and out-
11 reach program to provide a centralized, coordinated
12 effort for the development and dissemination of the
13 fair housing rights of individuals who seek to rent,
14 purchase, sell, or facilitate the sale of a home;

15 (2) utilize all amounts appropriated for such
16 education and outreach program under section
17 561(g) of such Act; and

18 (3) promulgate regulations regarding the fair
19 housing obligations of each recipient of Federal
20 housing funds to affirmatively further fair housing,
21 as that term is defined under title VIII of the Civil
22 Rights Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.).

1 **SEC. 5. GRANTS TO PRIVATE ENTITIES TO STUDY HOUSING**
2 **DISCRIMINATION.**

3 (a) GRANT PROGRAM.—The Secretary of Housing
4 and Urban Development shall carry out a competitive
5 matching grant program to assist private nonprofit orga-
6 nizations in—

7 (1) conducting comprehensive studies that ex-
8 amine—

9 (A) the causes of housing discrimination
10 and segregation; and

11 (B) the effects of housing discrimination
12 and segregation on education, poverty, and eco-
13 nomic development; and

14 (2) implementing pilot projects that test solu-
15 tions that will help prevent or alleviate housing dis-
16 crimination and segregation.

17 (b) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive a grant
18 under this section, a private nonprofit organization shall—

19 (1) submit an application to the Secretary of
20 Housing and Urban Development, containing such
21 information as the Secretary shall require; and

22 (2) agree to provide matching non-Federal
23 funds for 25 percent of the total amount of the
24 grant, such funds may include items donated on an
25 in-kind contribution basis.

1 (c) PREFERENCE.—In awarding any grant under this
2 section, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
3 shall give preference to any applicant who is—

4 (1) a qualified fair housing enforcement organi-
5 zation, as such organization is defined under sub-
6 section (h) of section 561 of the Housing and Com-
7 munity Development Act of 1987 (42 U.S.C.
8 3616a(h)); or

9 (2) a partner of any such organization.

10 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
11 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out the provi-
12 sions of this section \$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years
13 2008 through 2012.

○