



Contact: Mike Burnette | (804)354-0641 x118 | mburnette@HOMEofVA.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 25, 2015

HOME applauds Supreme Court's Landmark Decision on Fair Housing

Disparate Impact Can Be Used to Enforce the Fair Housing Act

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Today, the U.S. Supreme Court's 5-4 decision regarding disparate impact preserved a critical fair housing enforcement tool and is a solid victory for equal housing opportunity and for the future of families across our entire nation.

Fair Housing enforcement using disparate impact is an important protection for communities. It ensures that the Fair Housing Act can be enforced when policies that appear neutral on their face but in practice unfairly impact communities of color, persons with disabilities, families with children, and other protected classes. A full and effective Fair Housing Act is an essential tool for preventing discrimination and expanding opportunity to everyone in this country. The color of your skin, your religion, your family status or disability should never determine where you can or cannot live.

In this decision, the Supreme Court reaffirmed 45 years of legal precedent, including eleven appellate court rulings, and strengthens the bipartisan commitment made in 1968, and again in 1988, to ensuring Americans are protected from housing discrimination.

Justice Anthony Kennedy stated, "Much progress remains to be made in our Nation's continuing struggle against racial isolation... The Court acknowledges the Fair Housing Act's continuing role in moving the Nation toward a more integrated society." HOME couldn't agree more. Heather Crislip, president and CEO of HOME responded to the decision saying, "It's a banner day for those in the fair housing world. The Supreme Court's ruling further enforced that a policy or practice does not have to be intentionally discriminatory to violate the Fair Housing Act. The fact that it has a discriminatory impact is enough. This is an important tool to challenge discrimination."

The Court took a common-sense approach. Knocking down arbitrary barriers to fair housing has been working across the country for over four decades. It's only logical that if a housing practice like antiquated zoning ordinances unnecessarily excludes or segregates people, it should be replaced with an approach that is both fair and effective.

U.S. Senator Tim Kaine also remarked on the decision in a statement saying "Today's Supreme Court decision affirms the importance of fighting the effects of housing discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional. As a former fair housing attorney, I have seen how communities can be harmed by inequitable housing policies. We have made significant progress towards ending housing discrimination since Congress first passed the Fair Housing Act in 1968. I celebrate the Court's decision today which will allow us to continue that progress."

The Court's decision will not only continue to protect millions of Americans, but it also upholds the important principle that, as a nation, we value the diversity of the communities in which we live, made more poignant in

this key moment for racial justice in America. Fostering inclusive, prosperous communities is critical to our nation's success in the 21st century. It means creating better access for all Americans to quality education, jobs, and business opportunities, and to the American Dream of an affordable home—all of which power our economic growth.

[Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Virginia, Inc.](#) (HOME) is Virginia's premier fair housing and housing counseling organization, offering a variety of programs and services designed to ensure equal access to housing for all Virginians. HOME is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation and a HUD-approved housing counseling agency.

###

