



For Immediate Release

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Report to U.N. Addresses United States Legacy of Housing Discrimination National Fair Housing Alliance Joins with Fair Housing and Civil Rights Community

WASHINGTON, DC – December 11, 2007 – In preparation for an upcoming U.N. review of the United States' compliance with the international race discrimination treaty, the National Fair Housing Alliance has joined a coalition of more than 40 housing and civil rights organizations and scholars in a report detailing the continuing problem of racial discrimination and segregation in housing.

The report, titled *Residential Segregation and Housing Discrimination in the United States*, was submitted to the U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in preparation for the CERD Committee's February 2008 review of U.S. compliance with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). The U.S. ratified the CERD treaty in 1994, and the U.S. State Department issued its most recent report to the CERD Committee this past April – over four years late.

“The spirit and intent of the Fair Housing Act was for our federal government to take affirmative steps to eliminate housing, lending and insurance discrimination and promote residential integration,” said Shanna Smith, President and CEO of the National Fair Housing Alliance. “April 2008 will mark the 40th Anniversary of the passage of the Fair Housing Act, an opportunity for this country to reclaim our civil rights and end illegal housing discrimination. Schools will be integrated when our neighborhoods are integrated. Our neighborhoods will be integrated when racial steering by real estate companies and redlining by banks and insurance companies stops. We must rededicate ourselves as a nation to the promises of equal housing opportunity embodied in the law.”

The coalition's report details the ways in which current U.S. policy continues to promote racial segregation in housing, and it also addresses recent cutbacks in fair housing enforcement and the government's role in the subprime lending crisis. According to U.S. Census data detailed in the report, whites and African Americans continue to live in communities where their race predominates. Indeed, African Americans are the most residentially segregated group in the United States, a condition that is exacerbated by racial steering, which further perpetuates racial isolation within American cities and schools.

“After the Supreme Court's recent decision in the voluntary school integration cases, housing policy has emerged as the key to promoting integration in schools,” said Philip Tegeler, director of the Washington, DC based Poverty & Race Research Action Council and preparer of the report. “But the official policy of the U.S. Government is moving in the wrong direction. We need to see school and housing policy working together to promote civil rights goals.”

Ms. Smith, in concurring with Mr. Tegeler added, “What the Supreme Court’s decision in the Seattle and Louisville school desegregation cases makes clear is the best and surest way to eliminate ‘separate and unequal’ is through fair housing enforcement. When our neighborhoods are integrated, our schools will be integrated.”

The report is one of more than a dozen reports on criminal justice, education, health, poverty and voting rights being submitted to the CERD Committee today by the U.S. Human Rights Network on the occasion of International Human Rights Day, to highlight the growing importance of international human rights standards in the U.S.

The report is available at www.nationalfairhousing.org.

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About the National Fair Housing Alliance (www.nationalfairhousing.org)

Founded in 1988, the National Fair Housing Alliance is a consortium of more than 220 private, non-profit fair housing organizations, state and local civil rights agencies, and individuals from throughout the United States. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the National Fair Housing Alliance, through comprehensive education, advocacy and enforcement programs, provides equal access to apartments, houses, mortgage loans and insurance policies for all residents of the nation.