



MEDIA RELEASE

**Embargoed For Release
11 a.m., August 15, 2007**

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Bureau of Labor and Industries Moves Forward with Plans to Establish Local Enforcement Against Housing Discrimination in Oregon

The signing today of Senate Bill 725 by Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski brought the state's Bureau of Labor and Industries one step closer to providing local enforcement of laws banning discrimination in housing.

Senate Bill 725, sponsored by State Senator Margaret Carter, changed Oregon law in order to allow the Bureau to negotiate a contract to provide local investigations and enforcement of the federal Fair Housing Act. Currently, allegations of housing discrimination are handled by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) out of its Seattle, Washington office. Thirty eight states around the nation currently operate under such contracts with the Department.

"This is a good day for all Oregonians who face potential discrimination in matters of housing," said Oregon Labor Commissioner Dan Gardner. "We will soon have local control over enforcement of federal housing laws banning discrimination and Oregonians will be able to seek enforcement of those laws more conveniently and at less expense."

The Bureau will now enter into contract negotiations with HUD officials. Once a contract is signed, HUD will pay the Bureau on a per case basis for its work.

"Senate Bill 725 will improve enforcement of federal housing discrimination laws and increases local control without spending any additional General Fund or state dollars," noted Gardner. "This bill keeps more federal dollars here in Oregon."

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The effort to pass Senate Bill 725 received the support of the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department, the City of Portland, the Fair Housing Council of Oregon and the Urban League of Portland. This was the third legislative session that Commissioner Gardner, Sen. Carter and housing advocacy groups fought for passage of the bill.

“This was a cooperative effort among housing advocates, Senator Carter and I to regain local control in this important area,” said Gardner. “It was a long battle, but a very worthwhile one.”