

Milwaukee Co. Supv. Dimitrijevic: Committee advances Dimitrijevic proposal to ban housing discrimination

Posted on Tuesday, Jun 12, 2018

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MILWAUKEE – The Economic and Community Development Committee recommended adoption (3-1) of a proposal from Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic to change to Milwaukee County’s historic Fair Housing ordinance today, endorsing a measure to protect residents from discrimination based on their receipt of rental or housing assistance, commonly known as “Section 8.”

“I want to thank the members of the Economic Development Committee for their support of safe, affordable, quality housing for everyone in our community. I’m encouraged by the willingness of parties who are typically in opposition to come together and find solutions to the challenges of housing discrimination, racism, and segregation,” said Dimitrijevic.

Supervisor Dimitrijevic’s [proposal](#) adds “receipt of rental or housing assistance” to the list of prohibited forms of discrimination already included in Milwaukee County’s Fair Housing [ordinance](#).

According to the Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council, landlords often refuse to rent to Section 8 voucher holders as a cover to discriminate based on race, disability, sexual orientation, status as a victim of domestic abuse, or other forms of currently prohibited discrimination.

“Section 8 renters becoming a protected class does not mean that a landlord must accept any tenant with a housing voucher. What it means is that you cannot base your denial solely on the fact they possess a housing voucher. We do not oppose this legislation,” said Ron Hegwood, President of the Apartment Association of Southeastern Wisconsin, which represents landlords.

The Milwaukee branch of the NAACP, the City of Milwaukee’s Housing Authority, the Legal Aid Society, and Milwaukee County’s Office on African American Affairs all endorsed the proposal.

“This is an important step in making housing equally accessible and available to all,” said [Margaret Rozga](#), who was instrumental in Milwaukee’s 1960’s fair housing movement.

Dane County and the City of Madison, along with many states and municipalities around the country, already protect Section 8 voucher recipients from housing discrimination.

The County Board will consider the measure at their meeting on June 21.