STATE OF NEW YORK

4959

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

February 27, 2023

Introduced by M. of A. SOLAGES -- read once and referred to the Committee on Governmental Operations

AN ACT to amend the executive law, in relation to prohibiting housing discrimination based on criminal legal system involvement

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "housing for an equitable reentry and opportunity (HERO) act".

§ 2. Section 292 of the executive law is amended by adding a new subdivision 42 to read as follows:

42. The term "criminal legal system involvement" shall mean information regarding an individual's conviction, arrest, charge, or citation for an offense, participation in a diversion or deferral of judgment program, record of an offense that has been sealed, expunged, vacated, or pardoned, a youthful offender adjudication, or a juvenile delinquency determination.

§ 3. Paragraphs (a), (b), (c), and (c-1) of subdivision 2-a of section 296 of the executive law, as separately amended by chapters 202 and 748 of the laws of 2022, are amended to read as follows:

(a) To refuse to sell, rent or lease or otherwise to deny to or withhold from any person or group of persons such housing accommodations because of the race, creed, color, disability, national origin, citizenship or immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, military status, age, sex, marital status, status as a victim of domestic violence, lawful source of income**, criminal legal system involvement** or familial status of such person or persons, or to represent that any housing accommodation or land is not available for inspection, sale, rental or lease when in fact it is so available.

(b) To discriminate against any person because of his or her race, creed, color, disability, national origin, citizenship or immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, military

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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status, age, sex, marital status, status as a victim of domestic violence, lawful source of income**, criminal legal system involvement** or familial status in the terms, conditions or privileges of any publicly-assisted housing accommodations or in the furnishing of facilities or services in connection therewith.

(c) To cause to be made any written or oral inquiry or record concerning the race, creed, color, disability, national origin, citizenship or immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, membership in the reserve armed forces of the United States or in the organized militia of the state, age, sex, marital status, status as a victim of domestic violence, lawful source of income**, criminal legal system involvement** or familial status of a person seeking to rent or lease any publicly-assisted housing accommodation; provided, however, that nothing in this subdivision shall prohibit a member of the reserve armed forces of the United States or in the organized militia of the state from voluntarily disclosing such membership.

(c-1) To print or circulate or cause to be printed or circulated any statement, advertisement or publication, or to use any form of application for the purchase, rental or lease of such housing accommodation or to make any record or inquiry in connection with the prospective purchase, rental or lease of such a housing accommodation which expresses, directly or indirectly, any limitation, specification or discrimination as to race, creed, color, national origin, citizenship or immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, military status, sex, age, disability, marital status, status as a victim of domestic violence, lawful source of income**, criminal legal system involvement** or familial status, or any intent to make any such limitation, specification or discrimination.

§ 4. Paragraph (a) of subdivision 5 of section 296 of the executive law, as separately amended by chapters 202 and 748 of the laws of 2022, is amended to read as follows:

(a) It shall be an unlawful discriminatory practice for the owner, lessee, sub-lessee, assignee, or managing agent of, or other person having the right to sell, rent or lease a housing accommodation, constructed or to be constructed, or any agent or employee thereof:

(1) To refuse to sell, rent, lease or otherwise to deny to or withhold from any person or group of persons such a housing accommodation because of the race, creed, color, national origin, citizenship or immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, military status, sex, age, disability, marital status, status as a victim of domestic violence, lawful source of income**, criminal legal system involvement** or familial status of such person or persons, or to represent that any housing accommodation or land is not available for inspection, sale, rental or lease when in fact it is so available.

(2) To discriminate against any person because of race, creed, color, national origin, citizenship or immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, military status, sex, age, disability, marital status, status as a victim of domestic violence, lawful source of income**, criminal legal system involvement** or familial status in the terms, conditions or privileges of the sale, rental or lease of any such housing accommodation or in the furnishing of facilities or services in connection therewith.

(3) To print or circulate or cause to be printed or circulated any statement, advertisement or publication, or to use any form of application for the purchase, rental or lease of such housing accommodation or to make any record or inquiry in connection with the prospective

purchase, rental or lease of such a housing accommodation which expresses, directly or indirectly, any limitation, specification or discrimination as to race, creed, color, national origin, citizenship or immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, military status, sex, age, disability, marital status, status as a victim of domestic violence, lawful source of income**, criminal legal system involvement** or familial status, or any intent to make any such limitation, specification or discrimination.

(4) (i) The provisions of subparagraphs one and two of this paragraph shall not apply (1) to the rental of a housing accommodation in a building which contains housing accommodations for not more than two families living independently of each other, if the owner resides in one of such housing accommodations, (2) to the restriction of the rental of all rooms in a housing accommodation to individuals of the same sex or (3) to the rental of a room or rooms in a housing accommodation, if such rental is by the occupant of the housing accommodation or by the owner of the housing accommodation and the owner resides in such housing accommodation or (4) solely with respect to age and familial status to the restriction of the sale, rental or lease of housing accommodations exclusively to persons sixty-two years of age or older and the spouse of any such person, or for housing intended and operated for occupancy by at least one person fifty-five years of age or older per unit. In determining whether housing is intended and operated for occupancy by persons fifty-five years of age or older, Sec. 807(b) (2) (c) (42 U.S.C. 3607 (b) (2) (c)) of the federal Fair Housing Act of 1988, as amended, shall apply. However, such rental property shall no longer be exempt from the provisions of subparagraphs one and two of this paragraph if there is unlawful discriminatory conduct pursuant to subparagraph three of this paragraph.

(ii) The provisions of subparagraphs one, two, and three of this paragraph shall not apply (1) to the restriction of the rental of all rooms in a housing accommodation to individuals of the same sex, (2) to the rental of a room or rooms in a housing accommodation, if such rental is by the occupant of the housing accommodation or by the owner of the housing accommodation and the owner resides in such housing accommodation, or (3) solely with respect to age and familial status to the restriction of the sale, rental or lease of housing accommodations exclusively to persons sixty-two years of age or older and the spouse of any such person, or for housing intended and operated for occupancy by at least one person fifty-five years of age or older per unit. In determining whether housing is intended and operated for occupancy by persons fifty-five years of age or older, Sec. 807(b) (2) (c) (42 U.S.C. 3607 (b) (2) (c)) of the federal Fair Housing Act of 1988, as amended, shall apply.

§ 5. Severability. If any provision of this act, or any application of any provision of this act, is held to be invalid, that shall not affect the validity or effectiveness of any other provision of this act, or of any other application of any provision of this act, which can be given effect without that provision or application; and to that end, the provisions and applications of this act are severable.

§ 6. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day after it shall have become a law.