H. B. 2534

(By Delegate Skinner)

[Introduced February 2, 2015; referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.]

A BILL to amend and reenact §5-11-2, §5-11-3, §5-11-4, §5-11-8, §5-11-9 and §5-11-13 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended; and to amend and reenact §5-11A-3, §5-11A-5, §5-11A-6 and §5-11A-7 of said code, all relating to unlawful discriminatory practices; prohibiting discrimination based upon age or sexual orientation; and defining sexual orientation.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

That §5-11-2, §5-11-3, §5-11-4, §5-11-8, §5-11-9 and §5-11-13 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended and reenacted; and that §5-11A-3, §5-11A-5, §5-11A-6 and §5-11A-7 of said code be amended and reenacted, all to read as follows:

ARTICLE 11. HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION.

§5-11-2. Declaration of policy.

It is the public policy of the State of West Virginia to provide all of its citizens equal opportunity for employment, equal access to places of public accommodations, and equal
opportunity in the sale, purchase, lease, rental and financing of housing accommodations or real
property. Equal opportunity in the areas of employment and public accommodations is hereby
declared to be a human right or civil right of all persons without regard to race, religion, color,
national origin, ancestry, sex, age, sexual orientation, blindness or disability. Equal opportunity in
housing accommodations or real property is hereby declared to be a human right or civil right of all
persons without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, blindness, sexual
orientation, disability or familial status.

The denial of these rights to properly qualified persons by reason of race, religion, color,
national origin, ancestry, sex, age, sexual orientation, blindness, disability or familial status is
contrary to the principles of freedom and equality of opportunity and is destructive to a free and
democratic society.

§5-11-3. Definitions.

When used in this article:

(a) The term “person” means one or more individuals, partnerships, associations,
organizations, corporations, labor organizations, cooperatives, legal representatives, trustees, trustees
in bankruptcy, receivers and other organized groups of persons;

(b) The term “commission” means the West Virginia Human Rights Commission;

(c) The term “director” means the executive director of the commission;

(d) The term “employer” means the state, or any political subdivision thereof, and any person
employing twelve or more persons within the state for twenty or more calendar weeks in the calendar
year in which the act of discrimination allegedly took place or the preceding calendar year:

Provided, That such the terms shall may not be taken, understood or construed to include a private
Provided, however, that this article, with regards to sexual orientation, does not apply to a corporation, association, educational institution or institution of learning, or society that is exempt from the religious discrimination provisions of title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.) pursuant to section 702(a) or 703(e)(2) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 2000e-1(a), 2000e-2(e)(2)), except in the operation of a program funded by the state;

(e) The term “employee” shall does not include any individual employed by his or her parents, spouse or child;

(f) The term “labor organization” includes any organization which exists for the purpose, in whole or in part, of collective bargaining or of dealing with employers concerning grievances, terms or conditions of employment or for other mutual aid or protection in relation to employment;

(g) The term “employment agency” includes any person undertaking, with or without compensation, to procure, recruit, refer or place employees. A newspaper engaged in the activity of advertising in the normal course of its business may not be deemed to be an employment agency;

(h) The term “discriminate” or “discrimination” means to exclude from, or fail or refuse to extend to, a person equal opportunities because of race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, sexual orientation, blindness, disability or familial status and includes to separate or segregate;

(i) The term “unlawful discriminatory practices” includes only those practices specified in section nine of this article;

(j) The term “place of public accommodations” means any establishment or person, as defined herein, including the state, or any political or civil subdivision thereof, which offers its services, goods, facilities or accommodations to the general public, but does not include any
accommodations which are in their nature private. To the extent that any penitentiary, correctional facility, detention center, regional jail or county jail is a place of public accommodation, the rights, remedies and requirements provided by this article for any violation of subdivision (6), section nine of this article shall do not apply to any person other than: (1) Any person employed at a penitentiary, correctional facility, detention center, regional jail or county jail; (2) any person employed by a law-enforcement agency; or (3) any person visiting any such employee or visiting any person detained in custody at such the facility;

(k) The term “age” means the age of forty or above;

(l) For the purpose of this article, a person shall be is considered to be blind only if his or her central visual acuity does not exceed twenty/two hundred in the better eye with correcting lenses, or if his or her visual acuity is greater than twenty/two hundred but is occasioned by a limitation in the fields of vision such that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle no greater than twenty degrees; and

(m) The term “disability” means:

(1) A mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more of such the person’s major life activities. The term “major life activities” includes functions such as caring for one’s self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working;

(2) A record of such impairment; or

(3) Being regarded as having such an impairment.

For the purposes of this article, this term does not include persons whose current use of or addiction to alcohol or drugs prevents such persons the individual from performing the duties of the
job in question or whose employment, by reason of such current alcohol or drug abuse, would constitute a direct threat to property or the safety of others; and

(n) The term “sexual orientation” means heterosexuality, bisexuality, homosexuality or gender identity or expression, whether actual or perceived.

§5-11-4. Powers and objectives.

The commission shall have the power and authority and shall perform the functions and services as in this article prescribed and as otherwise provided by law. The commission shall encourage and endeavor to bring about mutual understanding and respect among all racial, religious and ethnic groups within the state and shall strive to eliminate all discrimination in employment and places of public accommodations by virtue of race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, sexual orientation, blindness or handicap disability and shall strive to eliminate all discrimination in the sale, purchase, lease, rental or financing of housing and other real property by virtue of race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, sexual orientation, blindness, handicap disability or familial status.

§5-11-8. Commission powers; functions; services.

The commission is hereby authorized and empowered:

(a) To cooperate and work with federal, state and local government officers, units, activities and agencies in the promotion and attainment of more harmonious understanding and greater equality of rights between and among all racial, religious and ethnic groups in this state;

(b) To enlist the cooperation of racial, religious and ethnic units, community and civic organizations, industrial and labor organizations and other identifiable groups of the state in programs and campaigns devoted to the advancement of tolerance, understanding and the equal
(c) To receive, investigate and pass upon complaints alleging discrimination in employment or places of public accommodations, because of race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, sexual orientation, blindness or disability, and complaints alleging discrimination in the sale, purchase, lease, rental and financing of housing accommodations or real property because of race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, sexual orientation, blindness, disability or familial status, and to initiate its own consideration of any situations, circumstances or problems, including therein any racial, religious or ethnic group tensions, prejudice, disorder or discrimination reported or existing within the state relating to employment, places of public accommodations, housing accommodations and real property;

(d) To hold and conduct public and private hearings, in the county where the respondent resides or transacts business or where agreed to by the parties or where the acts complained of occurred, on complaints, matters and questions before the commission and, in connection therewith, relating to discrimination in employment or places of public accommodations, housing accommodations or real property and during the investigation of any formal complaint before the commission relating to employment, places of public accommodations, housing accommodations or real property to:

(1) Issue subpoenas and subpoenas duces tecum upon the approval of the executive director or the chairperson of the commission; administer oaths; take the testimony of any person under oath; and make reimbursement for travel and other reasonable and necessary expenses in connection with such attendance;

(2) Furnish copies of public hearing records to parties involved therein upon their payment
of the reasonable costs thereof to the commission;

(3) Delegate to an administrative law judge who shall be an attorney, duly licensed to practice law in West Virginia, the power and authority to hold and conduct hearings, as herein provided, to determine all questions of fact and law presented during the hearing and to render a final decision on the merits of the complaint, subject to the review of the commission as hereinafter set forth.

Any respondent or complainant who shall feel aggrieved at any final action of an administrative law judge shall file a written notice of appeal with the commission by serving such notice on the executive director and upon all other parties within thirty days after receipt of the administrative law judge’s decision. The commission shall limit its review upon such appeals to whether the administrative law judge’s decision is:

(A) In conformity with the Constitution and the laws of the state and the United States;

(B) Within the commission’s statutory jurisdiction or authority;

(C) Made in accordance with procedures required by law or established by appropriate rules of the commission;

(D) Supported by substantial evidence on the whole record; or

(E) Not arbitrary, capricious or characterized by abuse of discretion or clearly unwarranted exercise of discretion.

(4) To enter into conciliation agreements and consent orders.

Each conciliation agreement shall include provisions requiring the respondent to refrain from the commission of unlawful discriminatory practices in the future and shall contain such further provisions as may be agreed upon by the commission and the respondent.

If the respondent and the commission agree upon conciliation terms, the commission shall
serve upon the complainant a copy of the proposed conciliation agreement. If the complainant agrees
to the terms of the agreement or fails to object to such terms within fifteen days after its service upon
him or her, the commission shall issue an order embodying such conciliation agreement. If the
complainant objects to the agreement, he or she shall serve a specification of his or her objections
upon the commission within such this period. Unless such the objections are met or withdrawn
within ten days after service thereof, the commission shall notice the complaint for hearing.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section, the commission may, where it finds the
terms of the conciliation agreement to be in the public interest, execute such the agreement, and limit
the hearing to the objections of the complainant.

If a conciliation agreement is entered into, the commission shall serve a copy of the order
embodying such the agreement upon all parties to the proceeding.

Not later than one year from the date of a conciliation agreement, the commission shall
investigate whether the respondent is complying with the terms of such the agreement. Upon a
finding of noncompliance, the commission shall take appropriate action to assure compliance;

(5) To apply to the circuit court of the county where the respondent resides or transacts
business for enforcement of any conciliation agreement or consent order by seeking specific
performance of such agreement or consent order;

(6) To issue cease and desist orders against any person found, after a public hearing, to have
violated the provisions of this article or the rules of the commission;

(7) To apply to the circuit court of the county where the respondent resides or transacts
business for an order enforcing any lawful cease and desist order issued by the commission;

(e) To recommend to the Governor and Legislature policies, procedures, practices and
legislation in matters and questions affecting human rights;

(f) To delegate to its executive director such powers, duties and functions as may be necessary and expedient in carrying out the objectives and purposes of this article;

(g) To prepare a written report on its work, functions and services for each year ending on June 30 and to deliver copies thereof to the Governor on or before December 1, next thereafter;

(h) To do all other acts and deeds necessary and proper to carry out and accomplish effectively the objects, functions and services contemplated by the provisions of this article, including the promulgation of legislative rules in accordance with the provisions of article three, chapter twenty-nine-a of this code, implementing the powers and authority hereby vested in the commission;

(i) To create such advisory agencies and conciliation councils, local, regional or statewide, as in its judgment will aid in effectuating the purposes of this article, to study the problems of discrimination in all or specific fields or instances of discrimination because of race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, sexual orientation, blindness, disability or familial status; to foster, through community effort or otherwise, goodwill, cooperation and conciliation among the groups and elements of the population of this state, and to make recommendations to the commission for the development of policies and procedures, and for programs of formal and informal education, which the commission may recommend to the appropriate state agency. Such advisory agencies and conciliation councils shall be composed of representative citizens serving without pay. The commission may itself make the studies and perform the acts authorized by this subdivision. It may, by voluntary conferences with parties in interest, endeavor by conciliation and persuasion to eliminate discrimination in all the stated fields and to foster goodwill and cooperation among all
elements of the population of the state;

(j) To accept contributions from any person to assist in the effectuation of the purposes of this section and to seek and enlist the cooperation of private, charitable, religious, labor, civic and benevolent organizations for the purposes of this section;

(k) To issue such publications and such results of investigation and research as in its judgment will tend to promote goodwill and minimize or eliminate discrimination: Provided, That the identity of the parties involved shall may not be disclosed.


It shall be an unlawful discriminatory practice, unless based upon a bona fide occupational qualification, or except where based upon applicable security regulations established by the United States or the State of West Virginia or its agencies or political subdivisions:

(1) For any employer to discriminate against an individual with respect to compensation, hire, tenure, terms, conditions or privileges of employment if the individual is able and competent to perform the services required even if such the individual is blind or disabled: Provided, That it shall may not be an unlawful discriminatory practice for an employer to observe the provisions of any bona fide pension, retirement, group or employee insurance or welfare benefit plan or system not adopted as a subterfuge to evade the provisions of this subdivision;

(2) For any employer, employment agency or labor organization, prior to the employment or admission to membership, to: (A) Elicit any information or make or keep a record of or use any form of application or application blank containing questions or entries concerning the race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation or age of any applicant for employment or membership; (B) print or publish or cause to be printed or published any notice or advertisement
relating to employment or membership indicating any preference, limitation, specifications or
discrimination based upon race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation,
disability or age; or (C) deny or limit, through a quota system, employment or membership because
of race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, sexual orientation, blindness or disability;

(3) For any labor organization because of race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sex,
age, sexual orientation, blindness or disability of any individual to deny full and equal membership
rights to any individual or otherwise to discriminate against such an individual with respect to hire,
tenure, terms, conditions or privileges of employment or any other matter, directly or indirectly,
related to employment;

(4) For an employer, labor organization, employment agency or any joint labor-management
committee controlling apprentice training programs to:

(A) Select individuals for an apprentice training program registered with the State of West
Virginia on any basis other than their qualifications as determined by objective criteria which permit
review;

(B) Discriminate against any individual with respect to his or her right to be admitted to or
participate in a guidance program, an apprenticeship training program, on-the-job training program
or other occupational training or retraining program;

(C) Discriminate against any individual in his or her pursuit of such these programs or to
discriminate against such a person in the terms, conditions or privileges of such these programs;

(D) Print or circulate or cause to be printed or circulated any statement, advertisement or
publication, or to use any form of application for these programs or to make any inquiry in
connection with a program which expresses, directly or indirectly, discrimination or any intent to
discriminate unless based upon a bona fide occupational qualification;

(5) For any employment agency to fail or refuse to classify properly, refer for employment or otherwise to discriminate against any individual because of his or her race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, sexual orientation, blindness or disability;

(6) For any person being the owner, lessee, proprietor, manager, superintendent, agent or employee of any place of public accommodations to:

(A) Refuse, withhold from or deny to any individual because of his or her race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, sexual orientation, blindness or disability, either directly or indirectly, any of the accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges or services of the place of public accommodations;

(B) Publish, circulate, issue, display, post or mail, either directly or indirectly, any written or printed communication, notice or advertisement to the effect that any of the accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges or services of any such place shall be refused, withheld from or denied to any individual on account of race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, sexual orientation, blindness or disability, or that the patronage or custom thereat of any individual, belonging to or purporting to be of any particular race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation or age, or who is blind or disabled, is unwelcome, objectionable, not acceptable, undesired or not solicited; or

(7) For any person, employer, employment agency, labor organization, owner, real estate broker, real estate salesman or financial institution to:

(A) Engage in any form of threats or reprisal, or to engage in, or hire, or conspire with others to commit acts or activities of any nature, the purpose of which is to harass, degrade, embarrass or
cause physical harm or economic loss or to aid, abet, incite, compel or coerce any person to engage
in any of the unlawful discriminatory practices defined in this section;

(B) Willfully obstruct or prevent any person from complying with the provisions of this
article, or to resist, prevent, impede or interfere with the commission or any of its members or
representatives in the performance of a duty under this article; or

(C) Engage in any form of reprisal or otherwise discriminate against any person because he
or she has opposed any practices or acts forbidden under this article or because he or she has filed
a complaint, testified or assisted in any proceeding under this article.


(a) Except as provided in subsection (b), nothing contained in this article shall be deemed
considered to repeal or supersede any of the provisions of any existing or hereafter adopted
municipal ordinance, municipal charter or of any law of this state relating to discrimination because
of race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, sexual orientation, blindness or disability,
but as to acts declared unlawful by section nine of this article the procedure herein provided shall,
when invoked, be exclusive and the final determination therein shall exclude any other action, civil
or criminal, based on the same grievance of the complainant concerned. If such the complainant
institutes any action based on such that grievance without resorting to the procedure provided in this
article, he or she may not subsequently resort to the procedure herein. In the event of If there is a
conflict between the interpretation of a provision of this article and the interpretation of a similar
provision contained in any municipal ordinance authorized by charter, the interpretation of the
 provision in this article shall apply to such the municipal ordinance.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, a complainant may
institute an action against a respondent in the county wherein the respondent resides or transacts
business at any time within ninety days after the complainant is given notice of a right to sue
pursuant to this subsection or, if the statute of limitations on the claim has not expired at the end of
such the ninety-day period, then at any time during which such the statute of limitations has not
expired. If a suit is filed under this section the proceedings pending before the commission shall be
deemed concluded.
The commission shall give a complainant who has filed a complaint a notice of a right to sue
upon: (1) The dismissal of the complaint for any reason other than an adjudication of the merits of
the case; or (2) the request of a complainant at any time after the timely filing of the complaint in any
case which has not been determined on its merits or has not resulted in a conciliation agreement to
which the complainant is a party. Upon the issuance of a right to sue letter pursuant to subdivision
(1) or (2), the commission may dismiss the complaint.
Notice of right to sue shall be given immediately upon complainant being entitled thereto,
by personal service or certified mail, return receipt requested, which notice shall inform the
complainant in plain terms of his or her right to institute a civil action as provided in this section
within ninety days of the giving of such the notice. Service of the notice shall be complete upon
mailing.
(c) In any action filed under this section, if the court finds that the respondent has engaged
in or is engaging in an unlawful discriminatory practice charged in the complaint, the court shall
enjoin the respondent from engaging in such the unlawful discriminatory practice and order
affirmative action which may include, but is not limited to, reinstatement or hiring of employees,
granting of back pay or any other legal or equitable relief as the court deems appropriate. In actions
brought under this section, the court in its discretion may award all or a portion of the costs of
litigation, including reasonable attorney fees and witness fees, to the complainant.

(d) The provisions of this section shall be available to all complainants whose active cases are pending before the Human Rights Commission as well as those complainants who file after the effective date of this section.

ARTICLE 11A. WEST VIRGINIA FAIR HOUSING ACT.


As used in this article:

(a) “Commission” means the West Virginia Human Rights Commission;

(b) “Dwelling” means any building, structure or portion thereof which is occupied as, or designed or intended for occupancy as, a residence or sleeping place by one or more persons or families and any vacant land which is offered for sale or lease for the construction or location thereon of any such building, structure or portion thereof;

(c) “Family” includes a single individual;

(d) “Person” includes one or more individuals, corporations, partnerships, associations, labor organizations, legal representatives, mutual companies, joint-stock companies, trusts, unincorporated organizations, trustees, trustees in cases under Title 11 of the United States Code, receivers and fiduciaries;

(e) “To rent” includes to lease, to sublease, to let and otherwise to grant for a consideration the right to occupy premises not owned by the occupant;

(f) “Discriminatory housing practice” means an act that is unlawful under section five, six, seven or nineteen of this article;
(g) “Disability” means, with respect to a person:

1. A physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of the person’s major life activities;
2. A record of having such an impairment; or
3. Being regarded as having such an impairment, but the term does not include current, illegal use of or addiction to a controlled substance, as defined in Section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act, Title 21, United States Code, Section 802;

(h) “Aggrieved person” includes any person who:

1. Claims to have been injured by a discriminatory housing practice; or
2. Believes that the person will be injured by a discriminatory housing practice that is about to occur;

(i) “Complainant” means the person, including the commission, who files a complaint under section eleven of this article;

(j) “Familial status” means:

1. One or more individuals who have not attained the age of eighteen years being domiciled with:
2. A parent or another person having legal custody of the individual or individuals; or
3. The designee of the parent or other person having custody of the individual with the written permission of the parent or other person; or
4. Any person who is pregnant or is in the process of securing legal custody of any individual who has not attained the age of eighteen years;

(k) “Conciliation” means the attempted resolution of issues raised by a complaint or by the
investigation of the complaint through informal negotiations involving the aggrieved person, the respondent and the commission;

(l) “Conciliation agreement” means a written agreement setting forth the resolution of the issues in conciliation;

(m) “Respondent” means:

(1) The person or other entity accused in a complaint of an unfair housing practice; and

(2) Any other person or entity identified in the course of investigation and notified as required with respect to respondents identified under subsection (a), section eleven of this article;

(n) The term “rooming house” means a house or building where there are one or more bedrooms which the proprietor can spare for the purpose of giving lodgings to persons he or she chooses to receive; and

(o) “Sexual orientation” means heterosexuality, bisexuality, homosexuality or gender identity or expression, whether actual or perceived;

(p) The term “basic universal design” means the design of products and environments to be useable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialization.

(q) “Assistance animal” means any service, therapy or support animal, weighing less than one hundred fifty pounds, with or without specific training or certification, that works, provides assistance, or performs tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, or provides emotional support that alleviate one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person’s disability.

§5-11A-5. Discrimination in sale or rental of housing and other prohibited practices.

As made applicable by section four of this article and except as exempted by sections four
and eight of this article, it is unlawful:

(a) To refuse to sell or rent after the making of a bona fide offer, or to refuse to negotiate for
the sale or rental of, or otherwise make unavailable or deny, a dwelling to any person because of
race, color, religion, ancestry, sex, age, sexual orientation, familial status, blindness, disability or
national origin;

(b) To discriminate against any person in the terms, conditions or privileges of sale or rental
of a dwelling, or in the provision of services or facilities in connection therewith, because of race,
color, religion, ancestry, sex, age, sexual orientation, familial status, blindness, disability or national
origin;

(c) To make, print or publish, or cause to be made, printed or published any notice, statement
or advertisement, with respect to the sale or rental of a dwelling that indicates any preference,
limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, blindness,
disability, familial status, ancestry or national origin, or an intention to make any such preference,
limitation or discrimination;

(d) To represent to any person because of race, color, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation,
blindness, disability, familial status, ancestry or national origin that any dwelling is not available for
inspection, sale or rental when the dwelling is in fact available;

(e) For profit, to induce or attempt to induce any person to sell or rent any dwelling by
representations regarding the entry or prospective entry into the neighborhood of a person or persons
of a particular race, color, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, blindness, disability, familial status,
ancestry or national origin; or

(f) (1) To discriminate in the sale or rental, or to otherwise make unavailable or deny, a
2015R1872

dwelling to any buyer or renter because of a disability of: (A) That buyer or renter; (B) a person
residing in or intending to reside in that dwelling after it is so sold, rented or made available; or (C)
any person associated with that buyer or renter.

(2) To discriminate against any person in the terms, conditions or privileges of sale or rental
of a dwelling, or in the provision of services or facilities in connection with the dwelling, because
of a disability of: (A) That person; (B) a person residing in or intending to reside in that dwelling
after it is so sold, rented or made available; or (C) any person associated with that person.

(3) For purposes of this subdivision, discrimination includes:

(A) A refusal to permit, at the expense of the disabled person, reasonable modifications of
existing premises occupied or to be occupied by the person if the modifications may be necessary
to afford the person full enjoyment of the premises, except that, in the case of a rental, the landlord
may where it is reasonable to do so condition permission for a modification on the renter agreeing
to restore the interior of the premises to the condition that existed before the modification, reasonable
wear and tear excepted;

(B) A refusal to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices or services
when the accommodations may be necessary to afford the person equal opportunity to use and enjoy
a dwelling; or

(C) In connection with the design and construction of covered multifamily dwellings for first
occupancy after the date that is thirty months after the date of enactment of the West Virginia Fair
Housing Act, a failure to design and construct those dwellings in a manner that:

(i) The public use and common use portions of the dwellings are readily accessible to and
usable by disabled persons;

19
(ii) All the doors designed to allow passage into and within all premises within the dwellings are sufficiently wide to allow passage by disabled persons in wheelchairs; and

(iii) All premises within the dwellings contain the following features of adaptive design: (I) An accessible route into and through the dwelling; (II) light switches, electrical outlets, thermostats and other environmental controls in accessible locations; (III) reinforcements in bathroom walls to allow later installation of grab bars; and (IV) usable kitchens and bathrooms that an individual in a wheelchair can maneuver about the space.

(4) Compliance with the appropriate requirements of the American National Standard for Buildings and Facilities Providing Accessibility and Usability for Physically Handicapped People, commonly cited as ANSI A117.1, suffices to satisfy the requirements of subparagraph (3)(C)(iii) of this subdivision.

(5) (A) If a unit of general local government has incorporated into its laws the requirements set forth in subparagraph (3)(C) of this subdivision, compliance with those laws satisfy the requirements of that subparagraph.

(B) The commission or unit of general local government may review and approve newly constructed covered multifamily dwellings for the purpose of making determinations as to whether the design and construction requirements of subparagraph (3)(C) of this subdivision are met.

(C) The commission shall encourage, but may not require, units of local government to include in their existing procedures for the review and approval of newly constructed covered multifamily dwellings, determinations as to whether the design and construction of such dwellings are consistent with subparagraph (3)(C) of this subdivision, and may provide technical assistance to units of local government and other persons to implement the requirements of that subparagraph.
(D) Nothing in this article requires the commission to review or approve the plans, designs or construction of all covered multifamily dwellings to determine whether the design and construction of the dwellings are consistent with the requirements of subparagraph (3)(C) of this subdivision.

(6) (A) Nothing in paragraph (5) of this subdivision affects the authority and responsibility of the commission or a local public agency to receive and process complaints or otherwise engage in enforcement activities under this article.

(B) Determinations by a unit of general local government under subparagraphs (5)(A) and (B) of this subdivision are not conclusive in enforcement proceedings under this article.

(7) As used in this section, the term “covered multifamily dwellings” means: (A) Buildings consisting of four or more units if the buildings have one or more elevators; and (B) ground floor units in other buildings consisting of four or more units.

(8) Nothing in this article invalidates or limits any law of this state or any political subdivision of this state that requires dwellings to be designed and constructed in a manner that affords disabled persons greater access than is required by this article.

(9) This section does not require that a dwelling be made available to an individual whose tenancy would constitute a direct threat to the health or safety of other individuals or whose tenancy would result in substantial physical damage to the property of others. The burden of proving such threat to health or safety or the likelihood of such damage is upon the respondent.

(10) For the purposes of this subdivision, rules, policies, practices or services regarding animals are subject to the reasonable accommodation requirements of subparagraph (B), paragraph (3) of this subdivision and the following provisions:
(A) In connection with a request for reasonable accommodation to the rules, policies or services, a person with a disability may be required to submit documentation, from a professional treatment provider, of the disability related need for the assistance animal.

(i) Such documentation is sufficient if it establishes that the assistance animal will provide some type of disability-related assistance or emotional support.

(ii) A person with a disability may not be required to submit or provide access to medical records or medical providers, or to provide detailed or extensive information or documentation of a person’s physical or mental impairments.

(B) A person with a disability may be denied the accommodation of an assistance animal if there is credible evidence that:

(i) The assistance animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated by another reasonable accommodation; or

(ii) The assistance animal would cause substantial physical damage to the property of other that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation.

(C) A determination that an assistance animal poses a direct threat of harm to others or would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others must be based on an individualized assessment that relies on objective evidence about the specific animal’s actual conduct.

(D) A request for a reasonable accommodation may not be unreasonably denied, conditioned on payment of a fee or deposit or other terms and conditions applied to applicants or residents with pets, and a response may not be unreasonably delayed.

§5-11A-6. Discrimination in residential real estate-related transactions.

(a) It is unlawful for any person or other entity whose business includes engaging in
residential real estate-related transactions to discriminate against any person in making available
such a transaction or in the terms or conditions of such a transaction because of race, color, religion,
sex, age, sexual orientation, blindness, disability, familial status, ancestry or national origin.

(b) As used in this section, the term “residential real estate-related transaction” means any
of the following:

(1) The making or purchasing of loans or providing other financial assistance: (A) For
purchasing, constructing, improving, repairing or maintaining a dwelling; or (B) secured by
residential real estate; or

(2) The selling, brokering or appraising of residential real property.

(c) Nothing in this article prohibits a person engaged in the business of furnishing appraisals
of real property to take into consideration factors other than race, color, religion, national origin,
ancestry, sex, age, sexual orientation, blindness, disability or familial status.

§5-11A-7. Discrimination in provision of brokerage services.

It is unlawful to deny any person access to or membership or participation in any multiple
listing service, real estate broker's organization or other service, organization or facility relating to
the business of selling or renting dwellings, or to discriminate against him or her in the terms or
conditions of such access, membership or participation on account of race, color, religion, sex, age,
sexual orientation, blindness, disability, familial status, ancestry or national origin.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to add “sexual orientation” to the categories covered by
the Human Rights Act, prohibiting discrimination in employment and places of public
accommodation; add “age” and “sexual orientation” to the categories covered by the Fair Housing
Act prohibiting discrimination in housing; and define “sexual orientation”.
Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from the present law, and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.