

NATIONAL COMMITTEE
FOR
SEXUAL CIVIL LIBERTIES

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Re: Statewide Housing Protection
Now Available to California Gays

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

In a precedent setting move, the State of California, Division of Fair Employment Practices has agreed to investigate and remedy housing discrimination cases against gay persons. This is the first time that gay tenants in California will have a state agency to assist them in sexual orientation discrimination cases.

This decision resulted from extensive negotiations with Governor Brown's office and other administrative officials by Mr. Paul D. Hardman of San Francisco and Mr. Thomas F. Coleman, a Los Angeles attorney.

In 1978 a decision was made by the Division of Fair Employment Practices not to handle gay housing cases, although it appeared that the Division had jurisdiction to do so. In August, 1979, this problem was discovered by Ms. Susan McGrievy, staff attorney for the Los Angeles Gay Community Services Center, when the Division refused to process several housing cases which she had referred to the Division for investigation. That same month the National Committee intervened and brought the matter to the attention of Mr. J. Anthony Kline, the Governor's Legal Affairs Secretary. Kline, Hardman, and Coleman then worked out a solution with Ms. Joanne A. Lewis, Chief of the Division of Fair Employment Practices.

Upon learning of the decision to handle gay cases, Thomas F. Coleman, Co-chair of the National Committee commented, "This is another example of the firm commitment of the Brown administration to equality under the law for all regardless of sexual orientation. The intervention and assistance from the Governor's office probably saved us three years of litigation over this issue. Now that we have statewide protection in gay housing discrimination cases, we should refer such cases to the Division of Fair Employment Practices for resolution.

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