

# Stop Housing Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation



## SUPPORT SB 423

There are same-sex couples in every locality in Virginia. Currently, some of these families are being denied the opportunity to secure the housing of their choice because housing providers can legally discriminate against them because of their sexual orientation.

HOME conducted 51 matched-pair email tests over the course of 2014 and 2015 to test the incidence of discrimination based on sexual orientation in Richmond, Northern Virginia, and Hampton Roads. For each test, we sent almost identical emails to housing providers to gauge their response to same-sex vs. different-sex couples. Our results compare responses from the same rental agent.

***44% of those tests showed worse treatment of same-sex couples than opposite-sex (straight) couples.***

Examples of differences in responses include: (see next page for samples)

- Only mentioning a special to the different-sex couple
- Telling the different-sex couple that the office is open one hour later than what was told to the same sex couple
- Telling the same-sex couple that there is availability in general but telling the different-sex couple more special information about availability including number of units available and rent amount
- Encouraging the different-sex couple to apply online but not mentioning an online application to the same-sex couple
- Offering a specific appointment time to the different sex couple but only telling the same sex couple general office hours

According to nationwide research conducted by the Equal Rights Center, same-sex couples seeking elderly housing experience adverse, differential treatment **48 percent** of the time when compared to opposite-sex elderly couples. In a nationwide study, HUD found that same-sex couples seeking rental housing experienced discrimination **16 percent** of the time.

**Twenty-two states**, the District of Columbia, and at least **240 local jurisdictions** already **prohibit housing discrimination** based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression. *Virginia is not one of them.*

One's sexual orientation is irrelevant to the ability to be a good tenant and neighbor. Housing providers should not be able to use this characteristic to block qualified homeseekers from housing. Nobody should be denied the right to choose where they live because of who they love.

**Now is the time to enact legislation which ensures equal housing opportunities for all Virginians regardless of their sexual orientation.**

## VOTE YES ON SB 423

Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Virginia, Inc.

626 East Broad Street, Suite 400, Richmond, VA 23219 • 804.354.0641  
VA Relay: 711 • [www.HOMEofVA.org](http://www.HOMEofVA.org) • [fairhousing@HOMEofVA.org](mailto:fairhousing@HOMEofVA.org)



# Actual responses from fair housing email tests

## Same-Sex Couple Response

T6-a

Feb 27, 2014 at 10:29am

Hello Nicholas-

Thank you for contacting me. We indeed have apartment homes available. We are here 7 days a week! M-Sat from 9:30am - 5:30pm & Sunday from 1pm -5pm. Let me know what works for you guys. Also, you must check out our community website, [REDACTED], it's a great introduction to our scheduled tour.

I look forward to working with you and ultimately meeting your future home needs.

Truly,

[REDACTED]  
Property Manager

## Different-Sex Couple Response

T6-b

Feb 27, 2014 at 3:25pm

Hello Matthew!

Thank you for contacting [REDACTED] I indeed have apartment homes available and would be most happy to tour both you and Amber. How does tomorrow, Friday 2/28 @ 1:30pm work for you guys? Please note, if you are unavailable at this time, we are here M-Sat from 9:30am - 5:30pm and on Sundays from 1pm - 5pm. I look forward to your reply and untimely meeting your future apartment home needs. If you haven't already visited our website, [REDACTED] please do so, it is a great preview of what is to come.

Truly,

[REDACTED]  
Property Manager

---

## Same-Sex Couple Response

T10-a

Feb 27, 2014 at 2:44pm

Hi David,

Thanks for your interest in [REDACTED]

Our Digital Brochure includes a lot of useful information- floor plans, photos, a list of our amenities, and more. From the Digital Brochure you can also request an appointment to tour our property. Just click on the Schedule A Visit link and let me know what time works best for you. We do have limited availability, so please come by soon!

If you would like additional information or if you have any questions I haven't answered, please reply to this email or give me a call at (804) [REDACTED]

Talk with you soon!

[REDACTED]

## Different-Sex Couple Response

T10-b

Feb 27, 2014 at 3:33pm

Hi Jason,

I'd like to show you everything that [REDACTED] has to offer. When would be the best time for you to take a tour? I have some time tomorrow afternoon anytime between 1:30pm - 5pm.

Inside our Digital Brochure, you'll also be able to view our floor plans, photos of property, and see our amenities. You can even begin the application process with our Rental Application.

If I haven't answered all of your questions, please contact me via email reply or give me a call at (804) [REDACTED]

Can't wait to show you around [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

---

## Same-Sex Couple Response

T29-a

Oct 2, 2014 at 11:52am

Hey there!

Which one bedroom are you referring to? I have a few coming up in the next couple of months!

Thanks!

[REDACTED] Leasing Professional

## Different-Sex Couple Response

T29-b

Oct 2, 2014 at 11:51am

Which one bedroom are you referring to? We would have to set up an appointment! The apartment is currently occupied!

Let me know!

The unit I have is 1350.00 and is a one bedroom one and a half bath with a den.

Regards,

[REDACTED] Leasing Professional