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Catholic Lay Organization Back Fair Housing Legislation

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Brooklyn, Oct. 29 - Eighteen Catholic lay organizations last night urged passage of State Fair Housing Practices legislation at a meeting sponsored by the Brooklyn Catholic Interracial Council.

The organizations, representing more than 210,000 Catholics in the metropolitan area, voted support of legislation which would outlaw discrimination in private housing throughout New York State.

Leaders of the organizations called upon Governor Rockefeller and legislative leaders of both parties to lend bi-partisan support to measures which would prohibit discrimination in private housing.

Rev. Archibald V. McLees, moderator of the Brooklyn Catholic Interracial Council, said, "These lay organizations represent a significant sampling of Catholic sentiment. Their support of anti-discrimination legislation is in keeping with the Bishops' Statement of 1958, "Discrimination and the Christian Conscience," calling for greater Catholic participation to achieve equal opportunity for all minority groups."

At the meeting Assemblyman Bertram L. Baker stressed the need for such law stating, "The proposed law will not interfere with the landlords' right to select tenants with regard to character, ability to pay, credit standings or other standards of selection."

"This legislation," he said, "is directed at overcoming racially restrictive housing patterns which create so much havoc to family life within minority groups."

"It is my firm conviction that a strong law to prevent discrimination in private housing, as proposed by the Baker-Metcalf Bill is an immediate need in the State of New York."

The organizations voting in favor of a State Fair Housing Practices law were:

- Brooklyn Diocesan Union of Holy Name Societies
- Association of Catholic Trade Unions
- Catholic Interracial Council of New York
- Brooklyn-Queens Federation of the Christian Family Movement
- Fordham University Downtown and Uptown Interracial Clubs
- Friendship House of Harlem
- Queens Catholic Interracial Council
- Brooklyn-Queens Federation of Young Christian Workers
- St. Columba Knights of Columbus Council
- Grail Foreign Student Center
- New York Professional Sodality
- Alumni Race Relations Council
- Catholic Laymen's Union
- Grail Overseas Training Institute
- New York Federation of Young Christian Workers
- Brooklyn Catholic Interracial Council
- New Rochelle Catholic Interracial Council