

**Opening Statement**  
**Chairman Michael G. Oxley**  
**House Committee on Financial Services**

**Subcommittees on Oversight and Investigations**  
**and Housing and Community Opportunity**

*Fighting Discrimination Against the Disabled and Minorities  
Through Fair Housing Enforcement*

**June 25, 2002**

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Today's joint hearing of the Subcommittees on Oversight and Investigations and Housing and Community Opportunity will review important issues involving discrimination in housing and discuss what needs to be done to prevent such discrimination. I thank Chairwomen Kelly and Roukema for calling this hearing and welcome our distinguished witnesses.

Unfortunately, the discrimination that generations of people have nobly fought to eliminate endures in today's society. Racial and economic discrimination taint the advances we make as a nation, and undermine the freedom that is the very fabric of our society. In recent years, we have also encountered an alarming rise in complaints by the disabled against discrimination of various forms. For all of these groups, the discriminatory practices in housing are among the most troubling aspects of their lives.

As members of Congress, we sit in a position to discern the problems of others, gather information, and implement policies to assist those who chose us. As this Committee has so fervently worked towards making the dream of homeownership possible for a greater percentage of Americans, we recognize the problems associated with all aspects related to housing. Discrimination against many Americans in their living arrangements is something that we must address and work to solve. I am confident that in today's hearing, we will receive the information needed to effectively address problems that plague many Americans, so that we may improve the lives of all Americans.

I am pleased to have such notable witnesses before us, as their extensive knowledge shall prove beneficial to us all. By providing us with their perspectives on the problem and their ideas to solve the problem, they serve as the bridge between the problem and the solution. Through an open dialogue with experts in housing and representatives of the victims of housing discrimination, I am sure we can move forward to make life better for these Americans.

I expect this hearing will also highlight the need for better coordination among federal, state, local and private organizations to prevent discrimination in housing. Again, I thank the Chairwomen for convening this hearing and our distinguished witnesses for testifying.