

Fair Housing Center of Southeast & Mid Michigan

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Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti Students, Teachers, Government Officials, Community Members and Advocates Work Together to Foster Welcoming Communities

In 1994, in response to hate crimes in Ann Arbor, the Fair Housing Center worked with community members to start its first **WIMBY** pledge campaign (**W**elcome **I**n **M**y **B**ack**Y**ard). We updated the original version and relaunched the campaign in 2017, during a time of increased visibility of intolerance, to help draw attention to the large number of people who believe in diversity and inclusion.

The public can read the pledge and sign on to show their support at www.fhcWIMBY.org. The pledge is about fostering diversity and inclusion, understanding our own implicit biases, and challenging us to speak up against prejudices and stereotypes. Signers are asked to demonstrate their commitment to the pledge and its principles by prominently displaying the fhcWIMBY logo (with a yard sign, poster, sticker, car magnet, etc.) and taking action against injustices in their community.

To help spread the word about the pledge campaign, a video [of local residents reading the pledge](#) was created. The FHC asked the community at large to submit a video clip. Ypsilanti Community High School Art Teacher, Lynne Settles, noted, "When I asked them [her students] to do the pledge, and they read the pledge, one of the first things said was, "This is really important - I am glad we were asked."

Danielle DeAngelis, Program & Communication Coordinator for the NEW Center in Ann Arbor, said "staff was excited for the opportunity to show their support to the entire Southeastern Michigan community. We ourselves were looking for a way to let our tenants and neighbors know that they are always "welcome in our backyard." This

pledge gave us an opportunity to be direct about this message, and join the community while doing so.”

The WIMBY pledge is not limited to Washtenaw county, or even to Michigan. The FHC hopes that many more people will resonate with the welcoming message, as opposed to a Not In My BackYard (NIMBY) attitude of intolerance and prejudice toward difference.

Video clips can be submitted on an ongoing basis. [Learn more here](#).

For over 25 years, the Fair Housing Center has worked to guarantee that people can choose where they want to live based on their own preferences and not the prejudice of others.

The Fair Housing Center of Southeast & Mid Michigan, founded in 1992, actively protects the civil rights of those who are discriminated against in the rental, sale, or financing of housing through investigation, education, advocacy, and legal action. The mission of the Fair Housing Center is to end discrimination in housing and public accommodations and to promote accessible, integrated communities. The FHC takes an average of 150 complaints each year from its eight-county service area – Clinton, Eaton, Ingham, Jackson, Lenawee, Livingston, Monroe, and Washtenaw counties.

The W I M B Y Pledge

Welcome In My BackYard

I who have signed below affirm that I welcome people of all walks of life in my neighborhood and community, and value human diversity in all its forms. I cherish my right to live according to my own values and beliefs, and respect the rights of others to do the same.

I am personally opposed to and will try to find ways to speak out against:

Housing discrimination and other forms of discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including sexual harassment), disability, familial status, marital status, age, source of income, student status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression;

Verbal and physical harassment and abuse of all kinds, especially against children;

Racist and anti-Semitic acts;

The "not in my backyard" attitude toward group homes, foster-care homes, shelters, and public, cooperative, and subsidized housing;

Ethnic intimidation;

Anti-immigration and anti-immigrant actions and prejudice;

Anti-gay, lesbian, and bisexual harassment;

Anti-transgender and gender expression harassment.

I recognize that I may also hold such prejudices and stereotypes of various kinds developed during my life. Over the next year, I will try to better understand and reverse such attitudes in order to ensure that I do not act upon them.

I also intend to exercise my rights of free speech and political expression by keeping the WIMBY sign in one of my windows for the next year, in order to increase consciousness in my neighborhood and community about the principles of this pledge.



www. **fhcWIMBY** *.org*

Welcome In My BackYard