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***Housing Rights Initiative and Compass Inc. Announce
Cooperation Agreement in Source-of-Income Discrimination
Lawsuit***

***Compass Inc. Reaffirms its Commitment to Policies to Protect
Low-Income Tenants***

(NEW YORK, NY) – The non-profit organization **Housing Rights Initiative (“HRI”) and Compass, Inc. (“Compass”)** have announced a cooperation agreement to settle HRI’s claims of source of income discrimination against Compass. The agreement will reinforce Compass’s policies and practices applicable to NYC Compass agents based on Compass’s commitment that recipients of housing vouchers do not face discrimination when searching for housing in New York City.

In March of 2021, HRI filed a lawsuit against 88 landlords and brokers, including Compass, the Corcoran Group, and Century 21. The lawsuit was filed by **The Legal Aid Society and Handley Farah & Anderson PLLC** on behalf of HRI. Under the cooperation agreement, Compass will, among other things, take the following actions to continue its efforts to combat source-of-income discrimination:

- Provide NYC Compass agents a higher commission for renting apartments to voucher holders;

- Dedicate trained staff to assist Compass agents with voucher holders' Paperwork;
- Conduct regular trainings for Compass agents on the functioning of voucher programs;
- Conduct know-your-rights training to first time home buyers regarding the rights of tenants with Housing Choice Vouchers;
- Recommit to its non-discrimination policy against voucher holders, including 1) a prohibition against income requirements for recipients of forms of publicly-funded rental assistance, other than those income requirements set by the housing voucher programs; 2) a prohibition against requiring that a prospective tenant's voucher cover the entirety of the monthly rent, unless the voucher program prohibits the voucher holder from contributing to the rent; and 3) a prohibition against consideration of a prospective renter's credit score if such renter's Housing Choice Voucher, or the renter's Housing Choice Voucher plus shelter allowance, covers the entirety of the monthly rent.
- Make it easier for Compass agents to ensure their advertising does not contain language that discriminates against voucher holders;
- Note Compass's non-discrimination policy on its website;
- Update Compass agent manuals and resource pages with its non-discrimination policies.

"This historic agreement with Compass paves the path to eradicate housing discrimination in New York State and across the country," said **Aaron Carr, Founder and Executive Director of Housing Rights Initiative**. "This agreement sets an important precedent that will reverberate across the real estate sector and put pressure on other real estate companies to reform their discriminatory business practices."

"While there is still much work to be done to eradicate widespread discrimination against tenants with housing vouchers, this agreement with the largest independent brokerage firm in the country is a step in the right direction," said **Robert Desir, Staff Attorney in the Civil Law Reform Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. "We are encouraged by Compass's continued commitment to non discrimination and its desire and determination to implement these changes quickly, and hope that other real estate companies take note and implement similar changes immediately."

In addition to the settlement with Compass, Housing Rights Initiative has also settled with several of the other New York City brokers and landlords, as part of the aforementioned fair housing lawsuit against 88 real estate companies. These settlements include commitments to non-discrimination policies that explicitly cover lawful source of income; commitments to post signage in corporate and public-facing offices that states that vouchers and other publicly financed assistance are welcome; commitments to reserve apartments specifically for tenants with vouchers; commitments that all officers, directors, and employees who are responsible for leasing decisions, leasing policies, or who interact with potential tenants will attend a fair

housing training developed by HRI; maintenance of records of the numbers of voucher holders who have secured housing; and inclusion of “Housing Choice Vouchers Welcome” in English and Spanish on all advertisements. The results of each will guarantee major real estate companies prohibit housing voucher discrimination as well as provide the opportunity for Housing Rights Initiative to train and monitor real estate companies to confirm that they are abiding by fair housing laws.