Overview

This bill authorizes the city council of Duluth to grant to a city human rights commission the enforcement powers necessary so that persons with housing discrimination complaints in Duluth receive rights and remedies substantially equivalent to those provided under the federal Fair Housing Act. When the federal department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has certified a local agency as "substantially equivalent," HUD will refer all fair housing complaints for that jurisdiction to the local agency and provide some funding to the agency.

Duluth, like dozens of other Minnesota cities and a few counties, has a volunteer human rights commission. Such commissions generally perform outreach and education, and may be set up without legislative approval. The only cities with special legislation allowing them to have commissions with enforcement powers relating to human rights are Minneapolis (1975) and St. Paul (1965). Neither of these cities are certified by HUD as a "substantially equivalent" agency.

1. **Duluth human rights commission.** Authorizes the city council of Duluth to establish a human rights commission or confer additional powers on an existing human rights commission, so that the commission will be able to provide rights and remedies for persons claiming housing discrimination that meet certain guidelines in compliance with the federal Fair Housing Act.

2. **Remedies; enforcement.** Authorizes the Duluth human rights commission to exercise the enforcement powers outlined in federal regulations, 24 CFR 115.202, related to housing discrimination. Penalties imposed by the human rights commission will be enforced by the district court.

3. **Effective date; local approval.** Effective the day after local officials comply with local approval requirements.