



WASHINGTON LAWYERS' COMMITTEE  
FOR CIVIL RIGHTS & URBAN AFFAIRS

**For Immediate Release**

**EQUAL RIGHTS CENTER FILES FIFTH NATIONAL LAWSUIT  
IN INITIATIVE TO STOP DISCRIMINATION AGAINST PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

WASHINGTON, D.C., November 22, 2006--The Equal Rights Center, represented by the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs and the law firm of Jordan Burt, LLP, announced today that it has filed a federal lawsuit against Post Properties, Inc., a developer of apartment complexes and condominiums, alleging discrimination against persons with disabilities.

The lawsuit is the fifth in a series of complaints filed by the Equal Rights Center against national residential apartment and condominium developers alleging the developers failed to include in their residential buildings, the basic features of accessibility required by federal civil rights laws. Today's complaint alleges that Post has engaged in continuous and systematic civil rights violations of the Fair Housing Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act in the design and construction of more than 60 apartment complexes in 7 states, including more than 20,000 individual apartment units. Such violations discriminate against persons with disabilities, as charged in the complaint.

Post Properties, a publicly-traded real estate investment trust, headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, is recognized in the multifamily housing industry as one of the fifty largest owners of multifamily housing units in the United States, claiming to own over 22,000 apartment units.

"It is estimated that there are over 50 million people in the United States with disabilities. Shall they be denied places to live in violation of the law? Our investigations make clear that one major player after another among our country's developers shuts out people with disabilities from the apartments the developers construct. Their continuing violations compel us to respond. The ERC will not stand by and watch it happen. We will pursue the struggle until this fundamental civil right for people with disabilities is won. No provider of housing, and certainly not one of the largest in the country, should be allowed to bar people with disabilities from its apartments by building them so that they are inaccessible," said Rabbi Bruce E. Kahn, the Executive Director of the Equal Rights Center.

The lawsuit against Post Properties is the fifth complaint filed against a major developer over the past few years as part of the Equal Rights Center's efforts to eliminate disability-based discrimination in the housing industry. The Equal Right Center previously filed, and settled, a lawsuit against Archstone Smith Trust. Suits against AvalonBay Communities, Bozzuto & Associates, and Equity Residential are currently pending.

According to the complaint, an Equal Rights Center investigation discovered numerous accessibility violations at several Post properties, including inaccessible ramp routes, stairs obstructing entrances, a lack of accessible parking, and apartment design that did not allow a person in a wheelchair to maneuver about the unit.

Post Properties 1.../2



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“Since 1991 the law has required developers to include basic features of accessibility in multi-family housing,” said Isabelle M. Thabault, Director of the Fair Housing Project at the Washington Lawyers’ Committee. “Fifteen years later, major developers like Post Properties continue to build apartment complexes that are difficult or impossible to access by persons who use wheel chairs. As a major provider of rental housing in the United States, Post Properties should be a leader in stopping this type of discrimination.”

The federal Fair Housing Act requires all covered multi-family dwellings, built for first occupancy after March 13, 1991, to be designed and constructed in a manner that incorporates certain basic features of both accessibility and adaptable design including usable doors, kitchens and bathrooms, reinforced walls for grab bars and accessible and usable public and common use areas.

"We'll be seeking an injunction and damages against Post Properties in this litigation in order to protect the rights of persons with disabilities to accessible housing" said Sheila Carpenter, a partner with the firm of Jordan Burt, LLP.

Originally established in 1983 as the Fair Housing Council of Greater Washington, the Equal Rights Center is a private, not-for-profit, civil rights organization that is now a product of mergers with both the Fair Employment Council in 1999 and the Disability Rights Council of Greater Washington on June 30, 2005. It is dedicated to identifying, challenging, and eliminating discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodations, and government services through education, research, testing, counseling, enforcement, and advocacy. To obtain more information about the Equal Rights Center, please go to [www.equalrightscenter.org](http://www.equalrightscenter.org) or call the Equal Rights Center at 202.234.3062.

The Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights & Urban Affairs was established in 1968 to provide pro bono legal services to address issues of discrimination and entrenched poverty. Since its founding, the Committee has handled more than 5,000 cases on behalf of individuals and advocacy organizations in the areas of fair housing, equal employment, public accommodations, public education, asylum and refugee rights, and disability rights. For more information about the Committee, see [www.washlaw.org](http://www.washlaw.org). The Committee can be reached at 202.319.1000.

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