



WASHINGTON LAWYERS' COMMITTEE  
FOR CIVIL RIGHTS & URBAN AFFAIRS

**For Immediate Release**

**EQUAL RIGHTS CENTER FIGHTS ACCESSIBILITY CRISIS IN HOUSING  
SUITS FILED AGAINST TWO NATIONAL DEVELOPERS**

WASHINGTON, D.C., September 6, 2007 – The Equal Rights Center, represented by the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights & Urban Affairs and the law firm of Gilbert Randolph LLP, announced today that it has filed federal lawsuits against Houston, Texas-based Camden Property Trust and Camden Builders, Inc. (Camden) and Lion Gables Residential Trust and Lion Gables Realty Limited Partnership (Gables). The lawsuits allege discrimination by Camden and Gables against persons with disabilities.

These lawsuits by the Equal Rights Center highlight the issue of residential apartment and condominium developers who are failing to include in their residential housing the basic features of accessibility required by federal civil rights laws. Today's complaints allege that Camden and Gables have 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 150 complexes located in the greater Washington, D.C. metropolitan area and throughout the United States. The number of affected housing units totals tens of thousands of individual apartment units.

Camden Property Trust is a publicly traded real estate investment trust is engaged in the ownership, development, construction and management of multifamily apartment communities through the United States. Camden Builders, Inc. is one of the entities through which the trust conducts its business operations. Lion Gables Residential Trust is a Maryland real estate investment trust with its principle offices in Atlanta, Georgia that is also engaged in developing, redeveloping, acquiring and managing multifamily housing dwellings throughout the United States. Lion Gables Realty Limited Partnership is a Delaware limited partnership through which Lion Gables Residential conducts property ownership and business operations.

"If the leading developers had a solid record of taking more seriously the Fair Housing Act and the ADA, the accessible housing crisis in this country would not be a crisis" said Rabbi Bruce E. Kahn, a founder and the executive director of the Equal Rights Center. He added, "In a country with 50 million people with disabilities, complying with the applicable laws is not only the moral and legal thing to do, but a sound business decision as well." He concluded with this promise, "We prefer to use our expertise to work with developers and assist them to get it right, but, when absolutely necessary, we are also prepared to take legal action. Bringing the accessible housing crisis to an end is long overdue."

According to the complaints, an Equal Rights Center investigation discovered numerous accessibility violations at 46 of Camden's properties and 18 of Gables properties, including inaccessible ramp routes, a lack of accessible parking, and apartment designs that do not allow a person in a wheelchair to maneuver about kitchens and bathrooms in units.

"The Fair Housing Act and its regulations provide clear guidelines for basic features of

Camden and Gables 1.../2



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accessibility in all newly-constructed, multi-family housing,” said Isabelle M. Thabault, Director of the Fair Housing Project at the Washington Lawyers’ Committee. “Given the clarity of these guidelines and the two and a half year period that was given to comply with the guidelines following their enactment so long ago, it is unacceptable that developers such as Camden and Gables continue to design and construct properties that are unsafe for, and inaccessible to, millions of persons with disabilities.”

Jerome Randolph of Gilbert Randolph LLP added, “Federal fair housing laws, which have been in existence for nearly a decade and a half, clearly require builders and owners of new apartment and condominium buildings to make sure that key elements of their housing are accessible to persons with disabilities. Camden and Gables between them have built or own more than 150 buildings containing thousands of individual units that fail to satisfy the clear requirements of the FHA. Gilbert Randolph is proud, along with the Washington Lawyers' Committee, to represent the Equal Rights Center in its efforts to convince developers, such as Camden and Gables to comply with these civil rights laws.”

The Equal Rights Center is a private, not-for-profit, civil rights organization that is dedicated to identifying, challenging and eliminating discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodations, and government services through outreach, education, research, testing, counseling, enforcement and advocacy. To obtain 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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