



For Immediate Release

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Equal Rights Center and Lerner Enterprises Reach Agreement to Improve Accessible Housing for People with Disabilities

WASHINGTON, D.C., September 29, 2011– The [Equal Rights Center](#) (ERC)—a national non-profit civil rights organization—and real estate developer Lerner Enterprises of Rockville, MD, announced today a joint agreement to work together to improve the supply of accessible housing for people with disabilities. With this agreement, [Lerner Enterprises](#) becomes the 11th member of the ERC's [Multifamily Housing Resource Program](#) (MHRP), making a 10-year commitment to work collaboratively with the ERC to train employees with respect to fair housing and accessibility, and to implement best practices that ensure accessibility at its multifamily properties.

“The Equal Rights Center is proud to reach this agreement and welcome Lerner Enterprises to the Multifamily Housing Resource Program,” said ERC Executive Director, Don Kahl. “The MHRP has changed the way the multifamily housing industry thinks about and prioritizes accessibility and is changing the lives of countless individuals by creating more accessible communities.”

With this agreement, Lerner Enterprises has also agreed to improve accessibility in 364 apartment units located at three Lerner apartment complexes in the greater Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, and agreed to reimburse the ERC for its time, expenses and attorneys' fees in reaching the agreement.

Founded in 1952, Lerner Enterprises is the largest private real estate developer in the greater Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Its services encompass all phases of real estate development, including planning, development, construction, leasing, and asset and property management.

"For 60 years Lerner Enterprises has valued both innovation and integrity to make Washington, D.C. and the surrounding metropolitan area a dynamic place in which to live, work and play," said Alan Gottlieb, Lerner's Chief Operating Officer. "We look forward to greater accomplishments as a result of our MHRP membership and collaboration with the ERC."

The MHRP was founded as a proactive collaboration between the ERC and multifamily housing developers to increase the number of residential housing units in the United States that are accessible to persons with disabilities, and to enhance housing industry compliance with federal, state, and local accessibility laws through the use of best practices, employee training, and collaboration with disability advocates.

The ERC was represented by the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights & Urban Affairs in reaching this agreement. "Ensuring people with disabilities can live in the community of their choice is a pillar of the Fair Housing Act Amendments," said Megan Whyte, Fair Housing Project Director at the Committee. "We applaud Lerner Enterprises for its commitment to work with the ERC to ensure that its properties are available to all individuals."

Lerner joins major multifamily developers AvalonBay Communities, Bozzuto Group, Camden Property Trust, Donatelli Development, Gables Residential, Kettler, Mill Creek Residential Trust, Paradigm Development Company, and Trammell Crow Residential, as well as Steven Winter Associates, Inc., a national architecture, engineering and building systems consulting firm, in MHRP memberships. MHRP developer members represent nearly 500,000 housing units across the country.

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About the Equal Rights Center (www.equalrightscenter.org)

Originally formed in 1983, the Equal Rights Center (ERC) is a national non-profit civil rights organization based in Washington, D.C. With members located in every state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, the ERC works nationally to promote equal opportunity in housing, employment, and access to public accommodations and government services for all protected classes under federal, state, and local laws.

About the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs (<http://www.washlaw.org/>)

The Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and 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 equal employment, fair housing, public accommodations, public education, asylum and refugee rights, and disability rights.