



**For Immediate Release**

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## Equal Rights Center Supports U.S. Commission on Civil Rights' Report on Fair Housing in the District

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 14, 2011– Today, the Equal Rights Center (ERC)—a national non-profit civil rights organization— Executive Director, Don Kahl, released the following statement in regard to the District of Columbia Advisory Committee to [the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights](#)' report, "Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing in the District of Columbia." The ERC, along with other housing experts, testified at the September 2010 briefing convened by the Advisory Committee to produce the report.

"The ERC strongly agrees with the recommendations provided in the report, 'Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing in the District of Columbia,' released today. Combined with education and training, the ERC believes that testing is the most effective tool to examine, document, and redress discriminatory fair housing practices in the nation's capital.

As the ERC stated in our testimony before the District of Columbia Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, while the District government has made progress in furthering fair housing, serious impediments do remain.

Since the ERC testified last fall, we have completed testing investigations and released a report that documented a 45% rate of discrimination against individuals attempting to use Housing Choice Vouchers in the District. Additionally, despite the D.C. Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs' assurances that neither they nor any certified third-party site inspectors has issued any building permits to multifamily projects that did not meet accessibility requirements, more than a dozen ERC surveys conducted in recent years documented multiple accessibility violations at **every** property.

The ERC supports the Committee's call for additional testing—not just involving Source of Income and Accessible Design and Construction, but every protected class in D.C.—and we stand ready and willing to work with the D.C. government, and particularly the D.C. Office of Human Rights (DCOHR), on future testing projects.

We hope the D.C. Government accepts the Commission's recommendations and acts to ensure that the DCOHR has adequate funding to realize its mandate of protecting the civil rights of all the District's residents."

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**About the Equal Rights Center** ([www.equalrightscenter.org](http://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 46 states and the District of Columbia, the ERC works nationally to promote equal opportunity in housing, employment, disability rights, immigrant rights, and access to public accommodations and government services for all protected classes under federal, state, and local laws..