



For Immediate Release

Ashley White, Equal Rights Center, 202.370.3204

awhite@equalrightscenter.org

Equal Rights Center, D.C. Lottery, Reach Agreement to Make Lottery Accessible to People with Disabilities

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 23, 2011—The [Equal Rights Center](#) (ERC)—a national non-profit civil rights organization—and D.C.'s Lottery and Charitable Games Control Board, announced today their agreement that will help ensure that the D.C. Lottery is accessible to individuals with disabilities and that D.C. Lottery agents adhere to federal accessibility laws and guidelines.

“The Equal Rights Center is pleased to reach an agreement with the District of Columbia that will improve the accessibility of the D.C. Lottery and allow all individuals to enjoy playing its games,” said Don Kahl, Executive Director of the ERC. “D.C. is one of the most progressive jurisdictions across the country in terms of advancing and protecting the civil rights of its residents; it has taken another important step to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities through this important agreement.”

The agreement, a result of a lawsuit filed by the ERC and others in 2006, takes several steps to ensure D.C. Lottery Agents are accessible to individuals with disabilities. Although exemptions can be granted to some D.C. Lottery Agents, the agreement generally requires Lottery Agents remove barriers to access:

- D.C. Lottery Agents will be required to remove any barriers to accessibility within 18 months;
- All new agents must remove barriers to accessibility prior to obtaining a license;
- D.C. Lottery Agents are now required to participate in accessibility and disability rights training;
- Lottery agents will procure accessible lottery equipment, if available; and
- The D.C. Lottery website will take steps to ensure it is accessible and advertise fully accessible D.C. Lottery Agent locations.

To support lottery agents in compliance efforts, D.C. has set up a fund of \$100,000 to assist in barrier removal. Surveys and reviews will also be conducted to ensure that all lottery agents comply with the agreement.

“One of the primary goals of the American’s with Disabilities Act was to ensure individuals with disabilities have equal access to government programs, and it is clear that this is a government program that many enjoy,” said Elaine Gardner, Disability Rights Project Director at the Washington Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights & Urban Affairs. “The agreement with D.C.’s Lottery Board is an important victory for people

with disabilities and we applaud the city for stepping in as a leader for civil rights.”

In 2006, the ERC received complaints from members that D.C. Lottery locations were not accessible to persons with disabilities, violating federal law—the Americans with Disabilities Act—and the D.C. Human Rights Act. Following the complaints, the ERC surveyed the entrances of 450 licensed lottery agents and found that citywide there were barriers to entry at over half of these sites.

Since its inception in 1982, the D.C. Lottery has licensed hundreds of agents to sell lottery tickets. Currently there are more than 450 lottery sales agents throughout the District.

In reaching this agreement, the ERC was represented by the Washington Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights & Urban Affairs and the law firm of McDermott Will & Emery LLP. The District of Columbia has also agreed to compensate the ERC and the two individual plaintiffs for their damages and attorneys’ fees incurred in this matter.

To access this release on the ERC’s website, please visit www.equalrightscenter.org/dclottery

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 33 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.

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. For more information about the Committee, see www.washlaw.org. The Committee can be reached at 202.319.1000.

About McDermott Will & Emery LLP (www.mwe.com/)

McDermott Will & Emery is a premier international law firm with a diversified business practice. Numbering more than 1,000 lawyers, the firm has offices in Boston, Brussels, Chicago, Düsseldorf, Houston, London, Los Angeles, Miami, Milan, Munich, New York, Orange County, Rome, Silicon Valley and Washington, D.C. Established in 1934 as a tax practice in Chicago, Illinois, McDermott has grown its core practices and offices around the globe. The expansion of our international platform has supported numerous cross-border transactions and litigation matters, while providing the experience necessary to offer corporate and commercial, international and domestic tax, labor and benefits, competition, intellectual property and regulatory counsel to clients across all industries.