



Annual Members Meeting and Alumni Reception



Wednesday, November 16, 2016

Busboys & Poets

OUR MISSION

The ERC is a civil rights organization that identifies and seeks to eliminate unlawful and unfair discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodations in its home community of Greater Washington D.C. and Nationwide.

Strategic Priorities

The ERC's core strategy for identifying unlawful and unfair discrimination is civil rights testing.

When the ERC identifies discrimination, it seeks to eliminate it through the use of testing data to educate the public and business community, support policy advocacy, conduct compliance testing and training, and, if necessary, take enforcement action.

6:30 pm Welcome & Opening Remarks

- Robert Dinerstein | **Board President, Equal Rights Center**

6:45 pm Presentation of Awards

- Rosemary Ciotti | **Advocate of the Year**
- AvalonBay Communities | **Corporate Partner of the Year**
- Roderic Boggs | **Alumni of the Year**
- Jerome Murphy | **Outstanding Public Service Award**

7:00 pm Close

- Melvina C. Ford | **Executive Director, Equal Rights Center**

2016 Equal Rights Center Honorees



Alumni of the Year

Roderic Boggs, Esq., served as the Executive Director of the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs for 45 years, retiring this year. During his tenure, he advanced civil rights law in virtually every area, including housing, employment, accessibility for people with disabilities, criminal justice reform, and more. He served as counsel in numerous cases, including arguments before several U.S. Circuit Courts and the United States Supreme Court. He also harnessed the resources of our city's private bar and its leaders to help secure justice and equal opportunity for all and raised the profile of pro bono practice in the legal profession nationwide.



***Corporate Partner
of the Year***

AvalonBay Communities, Inc., develops and manages high-quality apartment communities all across the country. AvalonBay owns, or holds interests in over 200 apartment communities with over 60,000 housing units in ten states and the District of Columbia, reaching the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Midwest, Pacific Northwest and Northern and Southern California. AvalonBay has been an Executive Member of the ERC's Multifamily Housing Resource Program since 2009, helping the ERC to make apartment living more accessible for people with disabilities.



***Advocate of
the Year***

Rosemary Ciotti, RN, MSN, NP, became a disability advocate after losing her ability to walk from an autoimmune disease in her late 30's with a family to care for and a career to salvage. Initially, her expectation was that life would continue exactly as it was except on wheels. The reality she discovered was a stark contrast. The barriers she encountered while attempting to do the most basic life activities, such as attending elementary school plays, grocery shopping, air travel, dining out and accessing health care, propelled Rosemary into being a voice for change. Rosemary is currently the President of Accessible Living, Inc. and recently retired after 10 years as an Arlington County Planning Commissioner and a long career as a nurse practitioner.



***Outstanding
Public Service
Award***

Jerome A. Murphy, Esq., is a partner with Crowell & Moring's Antitrust and Complex Litigation Groups. He currently defends companies facing antitrust claims and represents several groups of Fortune 100 companies in federal litigation brought to recover damages from antitrust cartels and assists multinational clients seeking global recoveries from worldwide price-fixing cartels. Jerome is also a member of the firm's Public Service Committee and maintains an active pro bono docket, with a particular focus on housing and accessibility cases, and he serves as the General Counsel for the ERC's Board of Directors.



Advancement by the numbers...



We've conducted nearly **700** civil rights tests to identify unlawful and unfair discrimination.



We served as the catalyst that moved a major restaurant chain to survey more than **100** of their stores for accessibility.



We've educated nearly **6,000** people across our social media platforms.

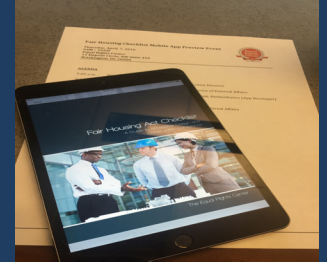


We responded to **62** intake complaints including fair housing, public accommodations and employment.

Program Highlights

Fair Housing App

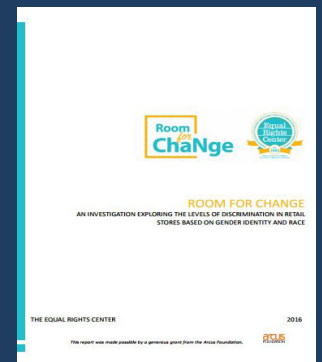
The Equal Rights Center launched its first ever fair housing accessibility app – the Fair Housing Checklist App. The new app transforms the ERC’s Fair Housing Checklist into a dynamic mobile app. The app highlights the seven accessibility requirements of the Fair Housing Act and enables general contractors, architects, developers and other housing industry professionals to upload and toggle between multiple construction projects. Users can see measurements and diagrams for the requirements, track and save their up-to-date progress throughout the project’s duration, and email their progress at any time. The app is available in Google Play and Apple stores, and can be found by searching for the phrase “fair housing”. This app is designed to ensure that multifamily housing providers have the right tools to build accessible housing for individuals with disabilities right from the start.



Room for Change

In May 2016 the Equal Rights Center released the, “Room for Change,” report which was made possible through a generous grant from the ARCUS Foundation. The report focuses on identifying potential differential treatment between cisgender women and transgender women, as well as women of color and trans women of color in retail stores.

The report presents the findings from the first civil rights testing project designed specifically to evaluate the level of discrimination transgender individuals face in the retail environment. The ERC undertook Room for Change as a pilot study to establish objective data to supplement the anecdotal information know about gender identity discrimination in large retail chains.



Unlocking Discrimination

The ERC released, “Unlocking Discrimination: A DC Area Testing Investigation About Racial Discrimination and Criminal Records Screening Policies in Housing,” in October 2016. This report outlines our investigation in evaluating whether white and African American women with criminal backgrounds were treated differently on the basis of race in DC area housing. The report’s findings revealed high rates of racial discrimination against African American women with criminal records. It also shed light on criminal records screening policies being used as proxies for race discrimination.



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