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Overcoming Barriers | Ensuring Communication | Creating Access

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LINCOLN CENTER SUED FOR DISCRIMINATION

New York, NY – Christina Kielich of Alexandria, Virginia, filed suit today in federal district court against Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and Lincoln Center Theater (“Lincoln Center”) alleging that the celebrated performance venues on multiple occasions denied her access based on disability in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and New York State and City law. Federal, state and local laws require performing arts venues such as Lincoln Center to ensure full and equal access to programming for individuals with disabilities. Kielich who is hard of hearing requires captioning in order to understand performances, but Lincoln Center has refused Kielich’s requests.

Kielich studied theater in the drama department at Catholic University, studied Shakespeare at Oxford University, and wrote her senior thesis on the role of women in Greek drama. She is an avid theater fan who enjoys a broad range of cultural events. In October 2015, Lincoln Center denied Kielich access to *The King and I*. In October 2016, Lincoln Center denied access to *Oslo* and in February and April 2017, Lincoln Center denied Kielich access to *The Glass Menagerie*. While hearing theater fans can purchase tickets to the performance of their choice, theater patrons with hearing disabilities have access only to very limited performances, none of which were accessible to Kielich.

“Just like everyone else who goes to the Lincoln Center, I appreciate good theatrical performances,” said Kielich. “I just want to be able to go there to enjoy the plays without barriers.” Kielich is represented by the National Association of the Deaf and Stein & Vargas, LLP.

Howard Rosenblum, CEO of the National Association of the Deaf said, “Since 1990, Federal law has required theaters to provide communication access to deaf and hard of hearing patrons, yet Christina Kielich has to fight for her right to enjoy theater performances at Lincoln Center in 2017. Lincoln Center must do better and follow the law.”

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National Association of the Deaf is the nation’s premier civil rights organization of, by, and for, deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the United States.

Stein & Vargas, LLP is a civil rights firm based in Washington, D.C. and committed to the principle that all people have full and equal access to all parts of society.

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