



## Commission on the Status of Women

1685 Main Street  
PO BOX 2200  
Santa Monica, CA 90401

September 13, 2018

Honorable Ted Winterer  
Santa Monica City Council  
1685 Main Street  
Santa Monica, CA 90401

Dear Mayor Winterer and City Councilmembers:

The City of Santa Monica Commission on the Status of Women, by means of this letter, respectfully requests that City Council consider introducing common sense legislation designed to protect hotel room attendants from all forms of sexual violence (harassment, abuse and assault), and overly burdensome workloads, and implementation of education and training with regards to identification of human trafficking. We ask that these workers (the majority of whom are women of color or immigrants) have protections in place to ensure that they can perform their jobs without fear of any form of retaliation.

Within hotels nationwide, hotel workers and, in particular, women who work as housekeepers/room attendants are all too often vulnerable to sexual violence by hotel guests. In addition, they are frequently assigned overly burdensome room cleaning quotas and unexpected overtime, which have a serious impact on their ability to perform their work in a proper and thorough manner. As hotel workers and hotel guests can come into contact with highly contagious and infectious diseases (including rhinovirus germs and Legionnaire's disease), it is critical that rooms and public areas be cleaned, sanitized, and maintained to the highest standards possible.

The Commission feels it is incumbent for the City to adopt legislation that includes the following components to protect workers and hotel guests alike:

- Protection for workers from all forms of sexual violence by providing panic buttons and other measures to enable workers to report misconduct and remove themselves from dangerous situations without fear of retaliation.
- Provisions to ensure workers are compensated fairly when they are required to perform unreasonable workloads and protections against mandatory overtime.
- Required training for hotel housekeepers/room attendants to ensure that workers have the knowledge and skills to both protect their own rights and safety, as well as their unique roles to help protect public health and safety.
- Required education and training to identify potential instances of human trafficking, domestic violence, and sexual violence.

In asking City Council to introduce this common sense legislation, it is important to note that similar hotel health and safety laws and initiatives have been implemented in cities such as Seattle, New York, Las Vegas and Chicago. Chicago and Emeryville have also passed laws addressing housekeeper workloads. With the support from UNITE HERE Local 11 and a number of community organizations, similar reforms through ballot measures are being considered in Long Beach and Palos Verdes. Our request is that the City of Santa Monica consider similar action. With these protections in place, Santa Monica will be able to take an important step to further ensure the everyday safety of women hotel workers and guests in our city.

Sincerely,

Sylvia Ghazarian  
Chair

City of Santa Monica Commission on the Status of Women