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**Statement of Gloria Allred Regarding Horace Mann School
Child Sexual Abuse Scandal**

We are here today to urge Horace Mann School in New York to conduct an immediate, independent and transparent investigation into the worst case of child sexual abuse in an American school in recent history.

We are asking Horace Mann to conduct this investigation because the horrific sexual abuse suffered by children at the hands of sexual predators which we will describe today was inflicted on Horace Mann students either by teachers and/or administrators who were employed at Horace Mann when they preyed on children at the school.

My law partner, Nathan Goldberg, my co-counsel, Mariann Wang, and I represent the majority of the adult survivors of child sexual abuse at Horace Mann. Some of our 25 clients are with us today and are willing to be identified. You will hear from some of them shortly.

They carried with them the pain suffering that began when they were students at Horace Mann and which has continued throughout their lives, and which is still here in this room with them today. They are here because they want Horace Mann and the New York legislature to take action to be sure that the abuse that they have suffered is never inflicted on children again.

For nearly a quarter of a century our clients, sometimes as young as 11 and 12 years old, were raped (anally and vaginally) and/or sexually assaulted and sexually abused by their teachers and administrators. Although, as far as we are aware, none of these culpable teachers and administrators are employed by Horace Mann today, what many of our clients were forced to endure is truly shocking. Students were forced to masturbate or orally copulate their teachers. One teacher engaged in statutory rape with his female student (our client who is not here today) for the entirety of her time at Horace Mann.

Our 25 clients consist of 22 men and three women who are now primarily in their 40's, 50's and 60's and who carry with them the scars of the terrible sexual abuse that they suffered at the Horace Mann School. A number of our clients were anally raped at a time when they were not old enough really to understand what was happening to them. For nearly all of our clients, the abuse they suffered amounted to the first time they were experiencing any sexual touching or interaction. They knew they did not want what was happening to them but for many, there were no words to express what was happening to them.

The perpetrators consisted of more than a dozen teachers and administrators at the school. A number of the perpetrators were serial offenders abusing multiple victims.

The abuse occurred at various locations on campus, at the perpetrators' homes and on school sponsored trips. There was no perpetrator free zone at the school and no place where a child was safe.

Many of the victims were groomed by their perpetrators. They were identified as being particularly vulnerable because they were having conflict with a parent or their parents might have been going through a divorce or some other issue was

causing stress in their family. They often turned to the perpetrators as a source of comfort and help. The perpetrators made them feel as though they cared and that the children were special. Some of the victims effectively lived in the homes of the perpetrators where they were sexually assaulted and/or raped on a daily basis.

One of the teachers bragged that he had driven twelve boys to suicide. That particular teacher was reported to a school administrator as early as Spring 1970; during a later effort to complain again to another school administrator many years later, our client was told that many people had complained about this particular teacher over the years, but that he could not believe that such a brilliant teacher could do things like that. That teacher was allowed to abuse a number of other students and physically beat at least one student after the school was made aware of his abuse.

The impact of the sexual abuse has been catastrophic for our clients. The abuse occurred when they were children, precisely at a moment in their lives when they were trying to learn how to be themselves in the world, and precisely at the hands of teachers who they most trusted and admired. Suddenly they learned through the abuse that they were worthless and could not trust anyone. Many of them suffered from feelings of hopelessness and after leaving Horace Mann were never able to live fulfilling lives or live up to what they and their parents had hoped and expected them to achieve.

Many of our clients have sought out therapists over the years trying to obtain help for dealing with what happened to them as students. Many have struggled with suicidal thoughts and feelings and been hospitalized because of the abuse. Some clients have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety for which they have had to take various medications in order to survive. The violation of the trust and the betrayal by these teachers have led to spirals of depression and ongoing struggles for virtually all of our clients. Clients have reported feeling isolated and alone with few close friends and difficulty with intimate and family relationships. Each of them feels profoundly betrayed by the teachers and administrators that were supposed to be taking care of them and by the institution that their parents paid money to have them attend. They live with feelings of shame and humiliation that has caused them to keep the secrets for all these years. In one case our client dropped out of school and was unable to attend school for years because of what happened to him. In several cases clients turned to drugs and alcohol abuse in order to try to cope with the abuse.

This case is unique. Unlike many other school sex scandals in the news which involved one predator (e.g. Penn State and Poly Prep), this case involves multiple sexual predators employed by Horace Mann either as teachers, and/or administrators. In addition, our case is unique because the horrific sexual abuse occurred over a period of

nearly 25 years, and because the number of child victims is so high (estimated at more than 30).

What also makes this case unique is that one of the abusers was Inky Clark, Horace Mann's headmaster for a decade who was then elevated to become President of Horace Mann for another decade. Mr. Clark was very good friends with Johannes Somary, a Horace Mann music teacher, who was also a serial sexual abuser who abused a number of our clients. Mr. Clark gathered around him a group of child molesters the likes of which have never before been seen or heard of in a school in this country. Inky Clark and some of the other administrators not only abused students but also protected the predators that preyed on them and misled students about what they could do about the abuse.

For example, Horace Mann administrators actively informed several of our clients, including one in 1970 and one decades later, that Horace Mann's policy regarding sexual abuse required the school to credit the teacher *not* the student. The policy, in essence was not to investigate, not to call the police. Instead it was to threaten the children that they would "tarnish" themselves, and would have their lives destroyed if they told anyone.

Several of our clients were told in no uncertain terms

that no one would believe their allegations, that by pursuing their complaints they would jeopardize their ability to get into good universities and that the abusers would sue them for libel – the list goes on.

For these reasons, most of the survivors kept their abuse a secret. They thought that they were alone and were not aware that others had been abused. Many of them did not have the words to describe what was happening to them at the age of 12 or 13 at the hands of people they trusted and were told that they should respect.

We are here today because our courageous clients want Horace Mann and the New York legislature to take action to be sure that the abuse that they have suffered is never inflicted on children again.

Since the scope and severity of the suffering was revealed last summer, the survivors have come together and repeatedly asked the school to conduct a broad investigation to uncover the extent of the abuse and the extent of the knowledge of the abuse by school administrators. To date, as far as we are aware, the school has not yet agreed to undertake a full, independent and transparent investigation into this horrific child sexual abuse scandal.

An independent investigation is vitally important to many of the survivors whom we represent. An investigation will help the school, parents, young people and the broader community learn how and why this could have happened and how it could have continued for so long at Horace Mann, which is considered by many to be the most prestigious private school in the New York area and one of the top schools in the nation.

The injuries to many of the children who were sexually abused, are deep and in many cases will last the rest of their lives. We represent clients that have been in therapy for the past thirty or so years to deal with the abuse. We want to make sure that Horace Mann and other schools will never again let this happen to innocent and vulnerable children in their care. The only way that this can be done is to first understand the full scope of what occurred and how it was able to occur and be kept secret for so long. We believe that an independent investigation with a public report at its conclusion can help to accomplish that goal. George Santayana said it best, “Those who cannot remember the past, are condemned to repeat it.”

We also want the New York legislature to pass the Markey bill (AB1771) which creates a one year window for survivors of child sex abuse to assert their legal claims, no

matter how long ago the abuse occurred. Passage of this bill into law, is extremely important to child molestation victims. In California, a similar bill was signed into law in July 2002 and it helped many adult victims of child sexual abuse to have access to justice for claims that they had previously been unable to assert because they were time barred by the statute of limitations. The present law in New York hurts child sexual abuse victims and protects predators.

Horace Mann as an institution should live up to the pronouncements it has made to the world about what the school believes. Horace Mann's school is built on its motto: "Great is the Truth and It prevails".

Horace Mann can and should seek the truth. It can do so by immediately agreeing to conduct an independent investigation which seeks to determine what exactly happened for years at the school and how and why it was kept buried. The school can also find out if there is anyone who may still be affiliated with Horace Mann who knew this secret that certain teachers and administrators were preying on children and tried to keep the truth from coming out. It can then take the appropriate action to sever its relationship with those individuals. In other words, the truth requires Horace Mann to take responsibility and then to take action.

It has taken enormous courage for our clients to have

come forward today. Our 25 clients, who were children at Horace Mann, were victimized by their teachers, and their administrators. As a result Horace Mann must now do everything that they can do to conduct an independent and transparent investigation and take immediate action to get to the truth. Great is the truth and it must prevail.

Gloria Allred

Attorney at Law

Representing 25 Adult Survivors of Horace Mann School Child Sexual Abuse

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