

CONTACT: GLORIA ALLRED
(323) 653-6530
Email: gallred@amglaw.com

Statement of Attorney Gloria Allred

On March 8, 2017, I held a news conference with active duty Marine Lance Corporal (LCpl) Marisa Woytek and former Marine Erika Butner. Both women have served our country here and abroad and both have been proud to earn the title, United States Marine.

Despite the fact, however, that they have sacrificed to serve our nation, and have earned our respect and gratitude, both have become victims of the Marines United Scandal.

Both had photos of them posted on web pages, without their knowledge or consent. Both had crude, vulgar, obscene and threatening comments posted in response to the unauthorized posting of their photos and both know other female Marines that have been similarly victimized.

In addition, Erika and Marisa have something else in common. After having been targeted by disrespectful men who dishonored the uniform that they wore in the United States Marines, these brave female Marines decided that they would no longer remain victims, and instead they would become fighters for change with a mission.

They decided to become a voice for women who had also been similarly victimized by the Marines United webpage and other similar webpages. Marisa and Erika's goal is to promote respect for women who are United States Marines and to have an impact on ending the misogyny and sexual harassment which many have been forced to endure in order to serve our country.

To that end, we have three goals. The first is to meet in person with Marine Commandant General Neller. On March 8, 2017, I sent a letter to him requesting a meeting with LCpl Woytek, former Marine Butner, other victims and me in order to share ideas to promote more respect for United State Marines who are women. Although I received a response from the General Neller's office, I do not yet have any commitment that Marine

Commandant Neller will agree to meet with the victims and no date or time for such a meeting has been provided to me. I ask, does General Neller care about victims? If so, why does it not seem to be a priority to meet with them directly and hear their ideas for change?

Second, we think it is important that the voices of the victims be heard in testimony before the House and Senate Armed Forces Committees. Although those committees have heard from General Neller about the Marines United Scandal, neither committee has invited the victims to testify. Why are they being ignored? Why are the challenges faced by women Marines who are serving our country and who want to improve the status and condition of women Marines not being addressed?

Women are not footnotes to history. We are the majority, and we have a right to respect and dignity and to have our voices heard. There can be no meaningful change without hearing from victims whose lives have been endangered by posts which suggest that they should be killed “by friendly fire” or that they should be raped or sexually assaulted.

Finally, we think that it is important to support the new bill to amend the Uniform Code of Military Justice to prohibit the nonconsensual distribution of private sexual images. This bill which was introduced by Representative Jackie Speier is called The Servicemembers Intimate Privacy Protection Act (SIPPA). It is long overdue and we look forward to testifying in support of it.

Will we accomplish our mission and our goals? In the words of the suffragettes we promise that “there will never again be a season of silence until women have the same rights as men on this green earth”. “Failure is impossible.”

Gloria Allred
Attorney at Law
Representing Marisa Woytek and Erika Butner
April 5, 2017