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Statement of Gloria Allred

Today we are here in Charleston, South Carolina, to announce that we are filing a lawsuit on behalf of Kayla Snipe (Age 28) against Hilton Worldwide, Inc., d/b/a Embassy Suites North Charleston- Airport Hotel. We allege that Embassy Suites' negligence resulted in an alleged sexual assault that Kayla was forced to suffer in her hotel room in the Embassy Suites in Charleston.

Kayla was formerly employed as a supply chain planner by SFK Aero Bearing Service Center, an Aerospace manufacturing company with a location in North Charleston, South Carolina ("SKF").

Our lawsuit alleges the following: Kayla and others were tasked with planning the SKF Christmas party in December 2013 which would take place at the Embassy Suites in North Charleston on December 14, 2013.

Kayla also rented a room at the same hotel so that she could arrive early to set up for the party and also stay overnight there after the party. When Kayla checked into her room, she did not register or authorize any other persons to obtain a key to her room or to be in her room.

Prior to the party that evening, Kayla consumed a large dinner and two lightly mixed alcoholic beverages. When she arrived at the party she did not drink any alcohol. Instead, she only carried and had a drink of Sprite so that she could focus on hosting. At the party she distributed gifts to the party guests but soon began to feel physically ill. She experienced difficulty walking, disorientation, an elevated heart rate and extreme dizziness.

She informed a co-worker and friend, Jimmie, that she was feeling very ill and he escorted her to her hotel room to lie down between 7:00 pm and 7:15 pm.

She gave him her room key and asked him to return to the party and check on her later.

After the party, Jimmie and his wife returned to her hotel room to check on her. Kayla was sleeping and appeared to be in fair condition.

Later that evening, another co-worker allegedly went to Embassy Suites check in desk and alleged that he was Kayla's boyfriend and needed her hotel room key to check on her. The desk clerk, without calling Kayla, to ask for authorization (which Kayla would have denied since the man was not her boyfriend) issued the man, who was inebriated, a room key which allowed him access to Kayla's room.

That man then entered her room and is now being criminally prosecuted on a charge of criminal sexual conduct against Kayla.

We have therefore filed a lawsuit against Hilton Worldwide, Inc. d/b/a/ Embassy Suites North Charleston Airport Hotel. We allege negligence (premises liability), negligent supervision, negligence, gross negligence and dram shop liability.

We are seeking actual and punitive damages according to proof at trial.

This is an important case for women because so many women travel for business or pleasure and stay alone in hotels. There they have every right to expect safety and privacy, and in fact a hotel has a duty to protect its guests from foreseeable risks of harm.

In this case, the accused assailant was extremely inebriated and was not authorized to be given a key to Kayla's room, since he was not registered to that room and Kayla had not given permission to the hotel to provide her key card to anyone. To provide a key card under these circumstances, especially to someone

who is drunk, is a clear breach of the duty of care that a hotel owes its guest to protect her from an intruder.

We are very proud of Kayla for her decision to speak out at this press conference today and for her decision to allow her name to be used.

Kayla is very concerned not only about the violation of her rights but also about the potential risk of harm to other business women that can result from a hotel's negligence in handing out room keys to guests' rooms to those who do not have proper authorization to receive them. She wants hotels to improve their security, protocols and practices to protect other women who may be guests there and she wants to warn women of some of the risks of harm that can ensue when a hotel fails to exercise the duty of care to them that the law requires.

This is not the first case in which I have been involved¹ in which a hotel has given a key to a man who was not authorized to be given it and who then entered a woman's hotel room and engaged in the sexual assault of the woman inside the room. I do hope, however, that it will be the last.

1. Ms. Allred is seeking to be admitted Pro Hac Vice in Kayla's lawsuit which was filed yesterday by South Carolina attorneys J. Lewis Cromer, J. Paul Porter and Ashley C. Story. Ms. Allred seeks to co-counsel with them.

Gloria Allred
Attorney at Law
Representing Kayla Snipe
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