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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of Miami Beach Moves to Protect Hotel and Hostel Employees from Sexual Harassment and Assault

— Requiring These Businesses to Equip Staff With a Safety Button—

Miami Beach, FL – For years, the hospitality industry in Miami Beach has been a profitable and significant part of the City’s economy and character. As such, ensuring the protection and welfare of these employees is a top priority to the City.

Today, the City Commission unanimously passed an ordinance that would arm hotel housekeepers and other staff with safety buttons to swiftly report inappropriate incidents in the workplace.

At the time of the #MeToo movement, low wage -- mostly immigrant women -- are unfortunately among the most vulnerable to sexual assault in the workplace. More than half of hotel housekeepers report being victims of sexual harassment during their jobs. Performing much of their work alone with a guest in rooms, these at-risk individuals are subjected to a higher chance of sexual harassment and violence by the very nature of their job.

“The statistics are beyond concerning, and it’s why I pushed for this necessary action to be undertaken by the City,” shared Commissioner Kristen Rosen Gonzalez.

Better protecting these individuals from sexual assault and harassment, the portable emergency device would provide an immediate and effective way for hotel workers to connect to police and hotel security and management if they feel in any way threatened or harassed during work hours.

The ordinance will take effect August 2019, at which time hotels and hostels will be required to offer their staff the device at no cost to the employee. Hospitality businesses will additionally need to place a designated sign providing information regarding the new measure on the inside of each guest room door.

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