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Statement of Gloria Allred Regarding Irene McCormack Jackson and Mayor Robert Filner

This morning we filed a lawsuit for sexual harassment against Mayor Robert Filner and the City of San Diego on behalf of our client, Irene McCormack Jackson. Many of you may know Ms. McCormack Jackson. She was a journalist for 25 years in San Diego and then became Vice President for Public Policy for the Port of San Diego. Because of her outstanding background and experience she was appointed by Mayor Filner as Communications Director and part of his core team. She began working for Mayor Filner in January, 2013.

There have been a number of press articles referring to Mayor Filner and suggesting that he asked a woman to work without her panties. The woman was not named. Irene is that woman.

The day that Ms. McCormack was appointed as Communications Director she was bursting with a combination of pride and gratitude to have an opportunity to support the vision that Mayor Filner had set forth during his campaign. She was honored to support what she believed would be an historic effort to improve the lives of the citizens of San Diego. She was willing to sacrifice and take a \$50,000 pay cut in order to take this position because she was led to believe that her experience and expertise, particularly in the Port area, was of vital importance to the administration and that she would play an important role. Simply put she believed in Mayor Filner's vision. She believed in Mayor Filner.

At the press conference at which he introduced Ms. McCormack Jackson, along with the other members of his core team, Mayor Filner said that "they all know what they are getting into." Irene thought that meant that she would have to work hard and do everything that she could to support the Mayor's program of change. Had she known what she was really getting into she would have run in the other direction as fast and as far as she could and would never have given up her secure job at the Port.

Irene soon learned that what she was really getting into when she accepted the position as Communications Director was that in order to do her job that she would have to endure the Filner headlock while he made degrading and humiliating sexual comments to her. She also learned that her job required her to suffer Mayor Filner telling her that she should work without her panties on, that he wanted to see her naked, that he could not wait to consummate their relationship and that he wanted to marry her.

Irene was shocked because they never had a relationship other than work and she never gave Mayor Filner any reason to think otherwise. Nonetheless it appeared that Mayor Filner felt that he had the right or the privilege to demand kisses, to drag her around in a headlock while whispering sexual

comments in her ear, to continually tell her how much he was in love with her, to repeatedly ask her when they were going to be together and consummate their relationship, and to request that she not wear panties at work. He apparently thought that he had the right to tell her that he wanted to see her naked because that is what he told her. On one occasion when he tried to kiss her and she told him to leave her office immediately the Mayor responded that he was the Mayor and he could be wherever he wanted whenever he wanted. He told her that he was infatuated with her.

In June, it became apparent to Irene that Mayor Filner did not have any intention to acknowledge or change his inappropriate sexual behavior. Under those circumstances she felt forced to resign her position as Communications Director for the Mayor.

The complaint alleges that Mayor Filner engaged in sexual harassment. We are seeking damages based on the sexual harassment that Mayor Filner directed at Irene and the sexual harassment of others that she witnessed, all of which created an intimidating and hostile work environment for her. We are seeking damages in an amount according to proof at trial.

Mayor, in addition to our lawsuit here is my message to you.

On July 11, 2013 you publicly stated "I need help." You said, "I'm clearly doing something wrong." Yes, Mr. Mayor you most certainly have done "something wrong" not only to Irene, but to many women. When you stated, "I need help" you were unclear as to why you need help or what type of help you need. Do you need help in order to know that it is inappropriate to place women in headlocks while making vile and disgusting sexual comments to them? Do you need help to know that you should not sexually harass women who work for you or anyone else for that matter? Are you so out of control or out of touch that you do not realize how your behavior affects working women? You served 19 years in the United States House of Representatives, and four years as Chairman of the House Committee on Veteran Affairs from 2007-2011. During that time there were countless stories and issues in the news about sexual harassment of females in the military. Didn't that help you to know that sexual harassment was wrong and also against the law? Were you paying attention during the sexual harassment scandals involving Senator Bob Packwood and Herman McCain and Clarence Thomas? Were you awake during any of those scandals?

What help do you think that you need in order for you to stop treating women as pieces of meat? Irene deserved your respect instead of being placed in the Filner headlock and dragged around like a rag doll while you whispered sexual comments to her. What help will change your thinking so that you will no longer believe that it is acceptable behavior to ask Irene to work without her panties on?

No, Mr. Mayor, it is not you, but your victims that need help because of the harm that you have caused them. That is why this lawsuit has been filed this morning in San Diego Superior Court.

Also, the people of San Diego need help. They thought they elected a leader of a progressive administration. What they got was you. Do you really believe that you would have been elected if you had stood before the electorate prior to the election and pathetically told them that you needed help to change your ways? The Citizens of San Diego deserve more, not less. They deserve a Mayor who stands for something, not someone who claims that at age 70 years old he still needs help in order to discern

right from wrong and asks those that elected him to stand by while he gets help and tries to figure out what he did wrong.

No, Mr. Mayor, you do not need help. What you need is to resign immediately. You have disgraced yourself and the office that you hold.

Gloria Allred
Attorney at Law
Representing Irene McCormack Jackson
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