



Civil Rights Department

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June 19, 2023
For Immediate Release
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Civil Rights Department Mediation Results in Miss Universe Organization Commitment to Non-Discrimination, Relief for Mother Barred from Pageant

Miss Universe Organization will not institute any rule that disqualifies potential contestants from participating because of pregnancy, childbirth, or parenthood

SACRAMENTO – The California Civil Rights Department (CRD) today announced a mediated settlement resulting in the Miss Universe Organization affirming its commitment to non-discrimination and relief for a mother, Andrea Quiroga, who was barred from competing in pageants as a result of being a parent. The voluntary settlement between the Miss Universe Organization and the individual complainant resolves sex discrimination allegations filed with CRD in 2022. As a result of the settlement, the Miss Universe Organization — and its affiliates, including Miss USA and Miss California — will not institute any rule that disqualifies potential contestants from participating in pageants because of pregnancy, childbirth, or parenthood.

“No matter where it occurs, discriminating against people because they are pregnant or have had a child is unlawful in California,” **said CRD Director Kevin Kish**. “Being pregnant is not grounds for barring someone from representing their community in a pageant. We applaud the mother who came forward to make her voice heard and the Miss Universe Organization for committing to ending archaic and sexist policies excluding people on the basis of parenthood. At the Civil Rights Department, we will continue to stand up for the rights of all our state’s residents.”

In 2022, CRD received a complaint from Andrea Quiroga against the Miss Universe Organization alleging sex discrimination under the Unruh Civil Rights Act, which protects Californians from discrimination in public accommodations such as businesses. The complaint challenged the Miss Universe Organization’s then policy that all contestants must never have given birth to a child, could not be pregnant, or be a parent. Pursuant to its statutory authority, CRD investigated the complaint and referred the matter to its [Dispute Resolution Division](#) to determine if the parties could reach a voluntary agreement. The division operates within CRD to provide free, neutral mediation services to help parties resolve disputes and address discrimination complaints filed with CRD. Each year, the division resolves hundreds of complaints, resulting in policy changes and millions of dollars in direct relief to impacted Californians.

As part of the settlement, the Miss Universe Organization has, among other things, agreed to:

- Have the complainant share her story as part of the organization’s public-facing diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.
- Not institute any rule or requirement in the Miss USA, Miss California, or Miss Universe pageants that would disqualify a potential contestant from applying because of pregnancy, childbirth, or parenthood.
- Provide an interactive training on the California Unruh Civil Rights Act to the Chief Executive Officer of the Miss Universe Organization.
- Include a non-discrimination statement on the Miss California pageant website.
- Provide monetary relief for alleged damages.

If you or someone you know has been the victim of discrimination, CRD may be able to assist you through its complaint process. General information about CRD’s complaint process and how to file a complaint is available [here](#). Additional information regarding protections under the California Unruh Civil Rights Act is available [here](#).

A copy of the settlement agreement is available [here](#).

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CRD is the state agency charged with enforcing California’s civil rights laws. Formerly known as the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH), the mission of CRD is to protect the people of California from unlawful discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and state-fund programs and activities, and from hate violence and human trafficking. For more information, visit calcivilrights.ca.gov.

