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Statement of Gloria Allred

We are here today at the Miss California USA pageant to celebrate a day of joy and justice for my client, Andrea Quiroga, and a momentous victory for women's rights.

Since she was fourteen years old, Andrea has dreamed of entering the Miss Universe pageant and using the platform to help single mothers, children, and other members of her community. However, when she reviewed the pageant's entry requirements, she was shocked to learn that although she met the eligibility criteria, there was one that made her ineligible and prevented her from becoming a contestant.

The Miss California USA rule for the Miss Universe international beauty pageant stated that a contestant "Must...never have given birth to a child, cannot be pregnant or be a parent." Andrea has a son, and therefore under Miss California USA's rules, she was not eligible to enter.

However, in California, our Unruh Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination against women because they are or were pregnant.

In March of 2022, we announced that we were contacting the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (now the California Civil Rights Department or "CRD") to initiate the complaint process for Andrea. We believed that the pageant's entry rules discriminated against Andrea and many other women, and our goal was to eliminate these discriminatory entry requirements. In July of 2022, the CRD filed a complaint against the Miss Universe organization as a result of Andrea's claims.

In August of 2022, the Miss Universe organization publicly announced that it was eliminating their 70-year-old rule, which Andrea had alleged was discriminatory. In making the announcement, however, the Miss Universe organization did not mention Andrea's complaint to the California Civil Rights Department, or our public statements in March of 2022, urging the Miss Universe organization to overturn this rule.

This month, the Miss Universe organization agreed, as a part of a settlement with the California Civil Rights Department and Andrea, that the Miss Universe organization will not "institute any rule or requirement in the Miss USA, Miss California, or Miss Universe pageants in their current forms that would disqualify a potential contestant from applying because of pregnancy, childbirth, or parenthood." They also agreed "to provide an interactive training on the California Unruh Civil Rights Act to the CEO of the Miss Universe Organization, within 120 days of the signing of this Agreement."

Today, Andrea will be achieving her lifelong dream of walking the Miss California USA runway with her son, Maddox. We congratulate Andrea on her courage in coming forward to tell her story and to demand accountability for herself and other mothers. She is the living proof that mothers can be powerful, poised, and talented beauty queens.

We commend the Miss Universe organization for moving forward with their new, more inclusive rules. We are thrilled for Andrea and for the positive outcome we have achieved for women all over the world.

**Attorney Gloria Allred
Representing Andrea Quiroga
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