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Statement of Veronika Didusenko

Hello.

My name is Veronika Didusenko. I lead the #RightToBeAMother global initiative, which has been fighting against the discrimination of young mothers in the beauty pageant industry, including Miss Universe, Miss World, Miss International, and Miss Earth, for many years.

In 2018, I lost my victory in the Miss Ukraine pageant (which is part of Miss World) because I had a young son. One of the judges at the Miss Ukraine pageant, Bohdan Yusypchuk, pointed at me live on air and said, "She had a child at the age of 19 and then divorced. I think it's wrong to make such person a role model." For this reason, I created a non-profit organization called #RightToBeAMother to represent all women who faced the same struggle in the beauty pageant industry as I did.

Since my lawsuit in Ukraine was not successful, I have an opportunity to apply to the European Court of Human Rights, which interprets the European Convention on Human Rights.

At the beginning of my journey, I could not have imagined this – the legendary women's rights attorney Gloria Allred joined our efforts. Her truly boundless energy, invaluable experience and assistance are impossible to fully appreciate.

Together we will cancel these discriminatory rules that have existed for more than 70 years!

Veronika Didusenko

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