2019 to See Implementation of Ballot Initiatives Intended to Protect Hospitality Staff

In the November half-term elections, voters weighed in on providing mobile panic devices such as RF Technologies HELP ALERT to provide greater security, particularly to staff working in isolation.

BROOKFIELD, Wis. (PRWEB) November 28, 2018 -- High profile security incidents demonstrate the gravity and impact that workplace violence has on our nation. Recent attacks have rightfully captured the public’s attention, and the unfortunate truth is that every workplace is at risk for situations involving violence and harassment. Within the hospitality industry, where housekeeping staff often work alone or in relative isolation, particular attention is being paid to the need to provide protection against such incidents. With increasing frequency, labor unions, the hotel industry itself and, now, voters, are calling for protection for these individuals.

2018 has seen increasing demand for personal panic alarms for hospitality staff, often in response to labor union demands; in September, five major U.S. hotel brands (Hilton, Hyatt, InterContinental Hotels Group, Marriott, and Wyndham) announced a joint pledge to enforce stronger safety and security measures for hotel employees—dubbed the ‘5-Star Promise’ the pledge calls for nationwide implementation of the devices by 2020. And, while a handful of U.S. cities already have such ordinances in place — New York City, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Miami Beach, and Seattle, among them — the November half-term elections saw an uptick in the call for voters to weigh in on ballot initiatives related specifically to the provision of personal security devices to protect workers on the job within their cities.

In November, Oakland, CA voters approved ‘Measure Z’ which, in addition to mandating increases in hourly wages for employees of hotels with 50 or more guest rooms, also establishes certain workplace protections—including employer-provided mobile panic devices. Measure Z also calls for protections to shield from reprisal employees who report violent or threatening behavior.

Also in November, voters In Long Beach, CA approved ‘Measure WW’ intended to put in place similar protections, namely that hotels with more than 50 rooms provide ‘personal emergency contact devices’ for staff who work in guest rooms without other hotel employees present, enabling them to summon on-scene assistance and report threatening conduct. In addition, hotels would be required to post notice of this practice in guest rooms.

Meanwhile, in Rancho Palos Verdes, CA, where one high-end resort property came under scrutiny in 2017, when a former employee filed a sexual harassment and assault lawsuit against the resort and a staffing agency (with others following suit during the year that followed), proponents of a similar measure were unable to meet deadlines for getting the initiative on the November ballot. It is likely, however, that the question will be put to voters there, in 2019.

RFT Vice President Brian Kinne, who heads up the company’s HELP ALERT mobile panic alarm product line, says, “We recognize the needs of the many dedicated workers in the hospitality industry, and are fully committed to providing the best tools possible to help mitigate potential threats. We know HELP ALERT
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