

## COURTS

# LB hotel faces harassment suit

Women allege downtown Renaissance supervisor inappropriately touched them and sought sex

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Two women filed a lawsuit against Marriott International and Renaissance Long Beach Hotel in Long Beach, alleging that an employee sexually harassed them on several occasions, and that Latina workers have been targeted for physical, verbal, emotional and sexual harassment by supervisors.

The lawsuit, filed in Los Angeles County Superior Court by Luz Cuevas, an on-call banquet server, and Teresa Evangelista, a lobby at-

tendant, alleges that a supervisor has sexually harassed them several times since 2010, including inappropriate touching and spanking as recently as August 2015.

Representatives of Renaissance and Marriott did not return requests for comment.

Cuevas, who has worked at the hotel since 2006 and also is known as "Maria Ruiz," alleges in the lawsuit that her supervisor offered to give her more working days in exchange for sex.

Cuevas filed a complaint with Human Resources, but according to the lawsuit, Human Resources told Cuevas her report could not

be corroborated. And she subsequently received fewer of the morning shifts she preferred.

She also alleges having seen the same supervisor sexually harass Evangelista — whom the lawsuit says has worked at the hotel since 1988.

Evangelista, the lobby attendant, alleges that she was also sexually assaulted in 2012 by a hotel engineer, whom she says made an advance after luring her into a remote storage room under the pretense of needing help to retrieve furniture.

The lawsuit says Evangelista filed a report to Human Re-

sources, but she knows of no corrective action taken.

Cuevas and Evangelista are represented by J. Bernard Alexander, Michael S. Morrison and Ana Mendoza of the Santa Monica law firm Alexander Krakow + Glick LLP. They are seeking unspecified economic and punitive damages.

"We've complained many times to Human Resources and management, yet nothing's been done," Evangelista said in a statement released by the law firm. "We're tired of being treated like this and receiving no help. As women trying to make a living, this conduct takes an enormous physical and

emotional toll on us."

In recent years, local hotels have come under fire by labor activists for what they say are unhealthy and dangerous working conditions endured by female employees.

Asked if the lawsuit this week was filed to maintain that narrative in the public eye, Morrison said the lawsuit is consistent with labor activists' claims, but the purpose is to defend individuals such as Cuevas and Evangelista.

"This is first and foremost about protecting our clients," Morrison said. "And yeah, it's about advancing workers' rights and not having others at the hotel subjected to the same kind of behavior."