

Transgender woman says she was denied bathroom access inside Balboa Park

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SAN DIEGO - A transgender woman is sharing her story after she said she was prevented from entering a restroom inside Balboa Park.

Giselle de la Rosa said last Friday night, after having coffee with a friend at The Prado, she walked a few steps to the women's bathroom in the House of Hospitality.

She said a maintenance worker outside the bathroom stopped her.

"He told me, 'No, you can't go because you're a man, not a woman,'" said de la Rosa.

De la Rosa said she tried to explain that she lives as a woman and legally is a woman.

"And he told me, 'I don't care. I don't care. You are a man,'" said de la Rosa.

De la Rosa said she left without using the bathroom.

"I'm stressed and I'm angry," said de la Rosa.

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De la Rosa said she's felt the sting of discrimination before. Threats and attempts against her life forced her to leave her home in southeast Mexico, ending in her receiving asylum in the U.S.

De la Rosa told 10News she's speaking up to send a message.

"This is my life. I want to live my life this way and the people need to respect. This guy hurt me and if others think the same way, it will hurt transsexual kids and adults," said de la Rosa.

In California, lawyers for the Transgender Law Center told 10News state non-discrimination laws are clear: transgender people can't be denied bathroom access at businesses, and more recently, at K-12 schools.

A few weeks ago, 10News reported on a [transgender SDSU student who said he was harassed and kicked out \(http://www.10news.com/news/sdsu-student-who-is-transgender-says-he-was-harrassed-kicked-out-of-mens-locker-room\)](http://www.10news.com/news/sdsu-student-who-is-transgender-says-he-was-harrassed-kicked-out-of-mens-locker-room) of a men's lockerroom, which the school refuted.

In the Balboa Park case, the bathroom was maintained by the nonprofit Balboa Park Conservancy. Though a spokesperson contends the transgender woman actually used the bathroom and was then accosted, they did confirm the incident, issuing this statement:

"We are aware of an incident in the House of Hospitality last Friday night where a guest encountered offensive behavior by one of our staff members. The Balboa Park Conservancy, which oversees the House of Hospitality staff, is very disturbed to hear of such behavior, finding it inconsistent with our core values that include providing a positive and welcoming visitor experience by all who visit Balboa Park. We take this matter seriously and will increase sensitivity training to our staff."

The Cohn Restaurant Group, which owns The Prado, issued this statement:

"We're disturbed to hear about the recent incident that one of our Guests experienced at a City owned restroom outside of The Prado Restaurant. We immediately investigated the situation and have determined that the bathroom attendant involved was not one of our employees, but rather is an employee of the House of Hospitality Association. We are longtime supporters of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender community, and we strive to make sure all Guests are welcome and comfortable at our establishment."

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