

Deadline Looms for Signage on Public Restrooms

REGULATION: Businesses could face lawsuits over lack of gender-neutral facilities.

By **CAROLINE ANDERSON** Staff Reporter

Business owners have until March 1 to make sure their signs for single-occupant restrooms are gender neutral under a new state law aimed at making public facilities more inclusive.

The law is fairly straightforward, simply requiring a new sign, and it doesn't prescribe a penalty for those who don't do so, leaving enforcement up to local jurisdictions.

But businesses that don't comply could face a potential legal pitfall, said **Karl Lindegren**, a partner at **Fisher Phillips**, which specializes in

employment law.

"I could see some enterprising plaintiffs' lawyers using it as evidence of gender discrimination," said Lindegren.

For example, if a business fired a transgender employee and didn't have the appropriate signage, the employee could claim that the business had a bias. A customer who was refused service at a business could make a similar claim.

"I would be surprised if somebody didn't at least try to raise it," said Lindegren.

Bay Area Democratic Assemblyman **Phil Ting** introduced the law, signed by Gov. **Jerry Brown** in September, in the wake of initiatives across the country to require transgender people to use bathrooms based on their birth gender.

The new law applies to all California businesses, government agencies, and other public places that have single-occupancy restrooms.

The law doesn't apply to restrooms with more than one stall.

Without a penalty built into the law, enforcement has been left to local agencies such as code enforcement departments.

The law doesn't require a specific symbol or sign, leaving that decision up to the business owner, so long as the restroom is "identified as all-gender toilet facilities."

Unlike the Americans With Disabilities Act, which specifically provides a way for the public to seek enforcement of the law through the civil courts, known as a private attorney general action, the gender-neutral law doesn't have such a provision.

Mark Verge, who owns several Santa Monica restaurants, said he isn't worried about the bathroom sign law. "For me, it's such a simple change," Verge said. "It's good that California is doing it."



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Switch: Men's and women's bathrooms at Santa Monica restaurant Art's Table.

Studio's Turmoil Continues With Exodus of Exec

By **HENRY MEIER** Staff Reporter

Ryan Kavanaugh's troubled **Relativity Media** is taking another a hit with the departure of **Hillel Elkins**, the studio's executive vice president of business and legal affairs.

Elkins said that after two roller-coaster years at Beverly Hills-based Relativity, he decided to move back to private practice and join Century City's **Sklar Kirsh** as a partner. He previously served as general counsel of **Blumhouse Productions** in Beverly Hills.

"A good deal of my time at Relativity has been turbulent, but it was a really informative experience," Elkins said. "This opportunity that came up was unique and gives me the chance to work with people I know and respect. It was more about that than any issues at Relativity. I have a good relationship with the company and will continue to work with people there."

At Relativity, Elkins oversaw deal-making related to creating, marketing, and distributing the studio's films, while corporate transactions, capital raise, and litigation was handled by the company's general counsel Andrew Levine. Levine, who joined Relativity from T-Mobile USA Inc. in 2015, remains at the company.

Elkins' is the third entertainment industry general counsel to join Sklar Kirsh in the past four years, and the second Relativity alum – partner **Michael Rosner** joined in 2013 immediately after heading up the studio's legal department. The firm also added ex-Deluxe Entertainment general counsel **Scott Ehrlich**, a mergers and acquisitions specialist, in 2016.

The lineup of former in-house talent is complementary, according to Elkins, who specializes in television and film, distribution, and production finance deals primarily. Elkins said the trio's combined knowledge was something few firms had.

"Our experience gives us insight and perspective that's unique from law firm lawyers who haven't worked in-house," he said.

For Relativity, the departure of Elkins is the latest in a string of setbacks for Kavanaugh's once thriving studio.

The company emerged from bankruptcy last March, but remained highly leveraged. The studio ultimately gave a majority stake in its business to Singapore's **YuuZoo Corp. Ltd.** for up to \$250 million.



Kavanaugh

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