

THE  
NATIONAL LAW REVIEW

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## New Jersey Hotels Must Provide “Panic Buttons”

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Monday, June 17, 2019

New Jersey Governor Murphy signed Bill S-2986 into law on June 11, 2019 mandating that “larger” hotels protect workers from sexual violence, assault, and other acts of harassment and violence that can occur on hotel premises by co-workers and/or guests. A copy of the law can be seen by clicking [here](#). The law notes that “[d]ue to the unique nature of hotel work, hotel employees are particularly vulnerable to unsafe working conditions because they often work alone in hotel guest rooms, which sometimes may be occupied. This solitary work places them at risk of assault, including sexual assault, and sexual harassment.” Qualifying hotels include “any hotel, inn, boarding house, motel or other establishment” with at least twenty-five (25) guest rooms. A covered hotel must provide a “panic button” (and training in its use) to summon help if an employee reasonably believes “there is an ongoing crime, harassment, or other emergency....” An employee is legally authorized to leave any area where there is a perceived danger; retaliation is prohibited.

Although New Jersey is the first state to mandate these protections, the idea is not unique. In October 2017, the Chicago City Council passed a “panic-button” ordinance. In August 2018, California introduced its own “panic button” bill, but it stalled at the Senate’s Appropriations Committee. In California, though, Sacramento and Long Beach enacted similar ordinances.

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