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GoTopless denounces arrest of NYC woman taken to a mental hospital for legally going topless

July 11, 2012- GoTopless strongly denounces the arrest of Holly Van Voast, who was handcuffed and taken to a mental hospital on Sunday just for standing topless outside a Hooters restaurant in New York City. When the arrest occurred, Van Voast was simply standing outside a Midtown Hooters location with friends, preparing to honor the 20th anniversary of the day New York became a legally topless state: July 7, 1992. (please see our news sections for more details on this historical date)

Ms. Van Voast was within her legal rights to go topless there, but the police treated her like a deranged, violent person. It's outrageous!

After the arrest, to add to her humiliation, she was forced to wait several hours in a hospital for a psychiatric evaluation. **This incident was an act of pure insanity on the part of the NYPD and of a deranged society in general.**

Are men taken to mental hospitals and made to undergo psychiatric evaluations for taking off their shirts? This is an extreme case of a women's rights violation; it constitutes blatant discrimination against women, and it's also a human rights violation that can't be tolerated in a democracy that prides itself for policing the world over human rights issues. **The NYPD must be prosecuted immediately!**

This latest topless-related arrest is especially noteworthy because of another New York City court case in 2007, concerning a public topless charge. Phoenix Feeley and her attorney, Jeff Rothman, successfully sued New York City for wrongful arrest, forcing the city to pay \$29,000 in damages. GoTopless is urging Van Voast to do the same thing!

By taking this to court and winning, she will show that violations of women's topless rights will not be tolerated and those who commit them will be found liable.

In fact, we're advising women who plan on going topless in New York to carry a GoTopless flyer listing the legal developments that confirm their right to do so. The flyer will quote the 1992 appeals court case making it legal for women to go topless in New York and also include a summary of Phoenix Feeley's 2007 case, which inspired spiritual leader and human rights activist Rael (rael.org) to launch the GoTopless organization that same year. (please email us and we will send you a copy.)

A glance at the amount of damages paid by New York City for Feeley's wrongful arrest will make police officers think twice about violating a woman's rights if a woman decides to shed her top. New York law is already on her side.

GoTopless is also inviting everyone, women and men alike, to participate in the next annual GoTopless Day on Aug. 26, in honor of Women's Equality Day.

Going topless is our Constitutional right based on gender equality under federal law. As Rael has said, either both men and women should be able to go topless in public without interference or else no one at all should be allowed to bare a chest in public. The laws need to treat both genders equally, as the Constitution guarantees!

We hope a huge number of women in New York City, where going topless is already legal, will have the courage to exercise their topless rights. The power of numbers will help prevent more of these wrongful, highly discriminatory

arrests and psychiatric evaluations.

The act of freeing one's breasts means more than freeing one's mind from cultural and religious taboos. It means freeing an entire society that has imposed silent, unfair codes on women. Many women have come to believe that such discrimination is normal. It's not.

It's really time to stop the insanity, and the insanity doesn't lie in a woman's decision to go topless on a hot summer day. It lies in allowing only men to go bare-chested when everyone suffers equally from the heat!

To learn more about GoTopless rallies planned for August 26, see our GoTopless Day section



Would you like to support the cause?

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