

Exclusivity or discrimination? Hotel reconsiders 'Women-Only' floor

The new JW Marriott in Grand Rapids had plans to reserve a hotel floor exclusively for women. The rooms would offer chenille blankets, robes and special soaps for a \$30 premium over regular room prices. Now the novel arrangement, designed to entice female business travelers, is on hold.

Public reaction has been mixed, to say the least. At least one representative from the Michigan Civil Rights Commission questioned whether the arrangement was legal. Pointing out that men would be barred and women charged more, the spokesman said, "You cannot deny a person services just because they are male or female."

Amway Corp., which owns the hotel, is reconsidering. One option being floated is simply to allow men into the premium rooms as well.

Caveat: Catering to a specific group is fine and even good business, but denying another group services based on their gender, race, religion, disability status or other protected characteristic violates both state and federal law.