

My name is Hilda Williams. My daughter started her first year as a freshman at Benedict College Fall of 2015. She was assigned housing in an all-girls dorm at Mather Hall. She was first assigned to a room on the 4th floor but due to some issues with her roommate and the air conditioning in the room she moved. She spoke with Ms. Mills on a couple of occasions about these concerns and she was finally given another room on the second floor. Shortly after my daughter had been given the new room on the second floor she was also assigned with a new roommate. Not long after the new roommate moved in, my daughter started to notice an odor that came along with the new roommate as well. She spoke to me about it and because at the time I was dealing with my own personal illness, I wasn't able to actually come and visit her dorm. As weeks went on and the smell got worse her sister went to visit her at the dorm and agreed that something was definitely wrong. My daughter brought the smell to Ms. Mills attention and Ms. Mills even visited the room and she seemed to not smell anything, but did say because the young lady was from another country she probably just had her "own body odor". Well finally, by early October, I was feeling better but still did not go to the room. But out of concern I went and met with Ms. Mills and spoke with her personally to see about the concern of the room. Just as my daughter had stated, Ms. Mills said the room only smelled as if water was running off of the air conditioning unit and that it was just the air; she also told me about the young lady being a foreigner.

Now this odor still continued to go on until it became so unbearable that my daughter started getting headaches and stayed feeling sick a lot...still nothing was done. My suggestion to her was to just keep in contact with Ms. Mills until something could be done. I was patient and so was my daughter. For a week prior to November 18, 2015, my daughter started complaining about some bumps and itching on her, but I really didn't think anything of it. I told her to maybe get some alcohol to go on them and maybe she would be alright. Well, on November 18, 2015 while I was still at work my oldest daughter called to tell me that her sister has called complaining of bites/bumps being on her arms, backside, and shoulder. I called my daughter (the student at Benedict) to see what was going on and she explained that she had bumps all over her and that they hurt, so I told her I would have her older sister bring some Benadryl and she could take her to the doctor if she felt she needed to go. Well once her older sister actually went to the college and saw the bites herself, she called me back out of concern because they were quite bad. So now I have my daughter to go to Ms. Mills and told her to have Ms. Mills call me, but instead when she went to located her, Ms. Mills I was already on the phone and spoke with her myself. I asked her about the odor of the room and the concern that the roommate may have issues with urinating in the bed. Since nothing had been done, my daughter now has unexplained bites. Well Ms. Mills said she wasn't aware of this information about the possible urinating, but she did see the bites on my daughter and was also concerned. The last thing she said was that she was doing to send my daughter to the Campus Nurse as well as get more details on the room from my daughter. Maybe not even 30 minutes later, my daughter called me back from the campus and said that the nurse really didn't do anything and just sent her on her way. By now I was pretty sure Ms. Mills was taking care of any concerns as far as the room, but it wasn't until my oldest daughter called me on Thursday around 2:05 pm from my youngest daughter's (the student) primary care physician appointment. My oldest daughter told me how concerned the nurse and doctor was about the bites on her sister. I was informed at the time they were indeed bedbugs and that I needed to get in contact with DHEC as well as the college immediately to inform them so that they could attend to this matter.

Well, it wasn't that simple. First I tried calling the campus only to get an answering machine saying the operator was unavailable. Then I called DHEC and I was placed on hold and passed from one

line to a second line, following a third line and finally reached a fourth person only to be told she was not sure who I even needed to speak with. It was quite sad and scary at the same time. To this day I am still unable to get ahold of the person in DHEC that I needed to speak to. Now I was back at square one. I called the campus again but this time I left a message; still there were no answers. I had an employee of mines look up the website for Benedict in which I did find a number for student services/affairs. A lady answered the phone and when I told her what was taking place she said "OK". My response was "OK? I need to know if anything is going to be done". I asked if there was someone in charge I could speak to maybe the dean or I didn't get a response I would result in going to the media for help. After stating this the lady on the phone finally said that she would have her supervisor call me back in the next 30 minutes. About an hour later a Ms. Jones called me back and when I told her who I was and why I was calling she didn't have a clue about any issues that had taken place at Mather Hall. She also said that I didn't have any documentation of where my daughter was seen by a nurse on campus nor had she been bitten by bedbugs. We talked for some time and agreed to meet at the Mather Hall at 4:30 pm. I told her that I would have the paperwork from the doctor's appointment, my daughter bites on her body, plus a witness who went with my daughter to the nurse's station. At that time I told her she was welcome to take all the pictures she needed of the bites.

At exactly 4:25 pm I arrived in front of Mather Hall. As I am seated in front of the dorm some of the young ladies who live in Mather Hall starts walking towards me telling me that I didn't want to go up to my daughter's room because it smelled so bad as soon as you stepped off the elevator. This was the most embarrassing moment for my daughter and for me and her oldest sister who was standing there also. Strangers I didn't even know or even knew my daughter by her name associated her with a room and a foul odor; how shameful was this? At 4:29 pm Ms. Jones arrived as promised and I walked up and introduced myself and from there my two daughters and I walked inside the building where we met with the housing director. We talked for a moment and went up to the second floor where she hoped to meet with Ms. Mills and a maintenance man. Once we stepped off the elevator which was my first time ever going up to the room, it was terrible! You could smell the foul odor before you even got down the hall to the room. Once the room was open it was quite unbearable. It smelled of a bathroom that had urine on the floor for months without any cleaning. The roommate was up and trying to cleanup; it was obvious she had been made aware that guests were indeed coming, but the smell was nothing that could be hidden. Ms. Jones asked my daughter where she slept and she pointed to the bed that was on the left side of the room. On the right side where her roommate slept was so much stuff that Ms. Jones actually told the roommate that she had too much stuff and some of it would have to go.

After visiting the dorm room we started back to the elevators to go stairs to try and locate Ms. Mills. Once arriving back at the Director's office Ms. Mills and the maintenance man finally showed up to discuss the situation. Ms. Jones concern and question to Ms. Mills was why was my daughter still in this dorm room and did she have another room where my daughter could be moved immediately. Ms. Mills tried to explain her actions by saying my daughter wanted to stay on the same floor since she knew other people on the second floor. My response to Ms. Mills was that my main concern was for my daughter's safety and once Ms. Jones, the Director, as well as the maintenance man saw all the bites on my daughter's arm then they understood what I was saying. Ms. Mills said that the maintenance man checked the room for bedbugs but didn't see any. I didn't respond because I knew as well as my daughter's knew where the bugs had come from. Even on the doctor's letter it was noted that the bedbugs came from my daughter's room 216 and that the mattress should be removed as well as any

issues in the dorm rooms to help resolve this issue. Well here is where the biggest concern comes in at. I told Ms. Jones in the first place I don't have bedbugs in my home from the school. First of all the mattress was not removed the room was never cleared out. The doctor had already given instructions that all her clothes and any bedding would need to be washed to get rid of the bedbugs.

It was at this time that I was notified by her (my daughter) that she had actually sent an email to the Dean and I saw the email which she sent out October 21, 2015. So that means a staff member was aware and no one even did a thing about it but said Thank You. My daughter basically begged for the Dean or someone to come and check out mold as well as what could have been bed bugs and at that time, but no one even checked into it. This did not happen. Once everything had been finalized the plan was for my daughter to be removed from the room right away. She was moved, but nothing was washed and she got moved right into a new room with a new roommate that didn't even have a clue to what had happened. My point is this: this was unsafe and unsanitary and nothing or no one should have even been moved until this whole room was completely leaned out and rid of the bed bugs in the right place. By that Friday my daughter ended up coming home for Thanksgiving Break. We ended up with bedbugs in our home. The situation was unacceptable and not my daughter or any of those students in those dorms should have to be put at risk this way. I strongly feel that something should be done as soon as possible. Even if it's starting an action plan. I feel as if no one on staff that day even had a clue as to what they should have been doing. Those bedbugs were treated like just a few roaches that got out of hand. Not as a mother and a parent that was embarrassing for me and my daughter should not ever have had to experience this. It's not about the money, but I felt that she should be entitled to her having her housing refunded back because she paid for housing in unbelievable conditions. No parent anywhere sent there child to Benedict College to be treated as if they are not even human. Please and I do ask you to right the wrong that has been done. I will be happy to forward pictures or even the letter from the doctor if there is still any doubt in what I am stating here. I have been as detailed as possible, but if you need any further information please contact me, not my daughter.

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Home: 803-814-2733

Cell: 803-445-7156

Proof of Contact

Left a message for Dean Smalls on 11/23/2015 with his office

Received an email from Mr. Smalls on November, 23, 2015 at 3:52 pm for me to call him.

Spoke to Mr. Smalls regarding the whole situation. He was out of work sick but did call me to address the issue. He explained he wasn't the person I needed to speak with but would get me over to the right person which was the V.P Gary Knight over Student Affairs. He also apologized on behalf of the college even though he knew it wouldn't do any good in this situation. As promised he texted me the number for V.P of Student Affairs at 4:35 p.m. On November 23, 2015. I called to speak with V.P McKnight but he was quite rude and hasty not even giving me a chance to properly speak with him. I told him that he was not willing to listen to me so I would have my husband call him back, which I did at around 4:40 p.m. on November 23, 2015 but my husband James Williams didn't get an answer even after trying the number twice.

I texted Mr. Smalls back at 4:44 pm November 23, 2015 to inform him of what had happened. Mr. Smalls texted me back at 6:02 p.m. November 23, 2015 and said he would try to contact Student Affairs the next day. After not hearing back from Mr. Smalls by 12:00 p.m., I sent him an email at 12:28 p.m. on November 24, 2015 to touch basis and try to see who I could speak to other than Mr. McKnight at 12:57 p.m. on November 24, 2015. Mr. Smalls emailed me back to let me know he was still out ill and asked me to give him until Monday to get back with me on the person contact for help other than Mr. McKnight since the school would be closed for Thanksgiving and reopen on Monday November 28, 2015.

After not hearing anything on Monday from Mr. Smalls I did text him on Tuesday December 1, 2015 at 12:58 p.m. telling him I have him a chance to try and speak to someone on this situation and still hadn't heard anything from him and that I was going to push this issue to anyone who was willing to listen. I finally got a text back from Dean Smalls at 4:25 p.m. December 1, 2015; telling me he was sorry if I wasn't satisfied with the timing of his response, but the college just reopened on yesterday from Thanksgiving break. He stated that he spoke with V.P McKnight and members of his management team that was not willing to talk and have me contact information for Mrs. Mildred Lenix.