

A RESOLUTION OF THE JACKSON COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Resolution No. 2019-002

Regarding Leadership and Ineffective Handling of Sexual Harassment Complaints in the Oregon Legislature

WHEREAS, the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) is the agency tasked with protecting employment rights and public accomodation against discrimination, and the Labor Commissioner is the elected official who manages BOLI.(1)

WHEREAS, Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian filed a complaint with BOLI on August 1, 2018 against the Oregon Legislative Assembly and Legislative Administration Committee as employers for allowing sexual harassment in the state legislature which has created a hostile work environment; (2)

WHEREAS, Senators Sara Gesler and Elizabeth Steiner-Hayward reported unwelcome sexual conduct and inappropriate touching by Senator Jeff Kruse as early as March 2016; (3)

WHEREAS, Kruse resigned in March 2018 when an outside investigation concluded at least 15 women, including student interns, were sexually harassed by Senator Kruse; (4)

WHEREAS, Avakian produced a 52-page investigative report that includes "substantial evidence" of numerous instances of Senate President Peter Courtney (D-Salem) failing to address sexual harassment in the Capitol; (5)(6)

WHEREAS, The Senate President's office manager, a woman, acknowledged dating a male member of the House of Representatives, she was offered the choice of resigning, being demoted or being fired; She was given that ultimatum even though dating a House member was allowed under legislative rules.(8)

WHEREAS, When a female legislative staffer of Senate President Courtney's office complained of unwanted attention from a male legislative staffer of Senate President Courtney's office in May 2015, the male staffer kept his job; illustrating a clear discrepancy between treatment of male and female staffers. (8)

WHEREAS, The Senate President and others have systematically brushed sexual harassment complaints under the rug; (9)

WHEREAS, The Senate President has also sent a clear message to women in the Capitol: If you speak up for yourself and other women in the building, as Sen. Sara Gesler has, you will be ostracized and shamed; (10)

WHEREAS, There is a pervasive culture of harassment and abuse against women within the capitol from members of both parties and silencing of complaints by both the senate president and other members of the senate. (11)

WHEREAS, the national #MeToo movement has brought attention to the pervasive issue of sexual assault and the struggle for survivors to be heard and believed; (12); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That we support people reporting harassment and abuse, protection of their privacy while doing so, and thorough investigations of all reports; and

RESOLVED, That we condemn any efforts to silence people reporting sexual harassment, bullying or intimidation, or to inhibit or obscure their ability and understanding of available legal remedies; and

RESOLVED, We call upon President Courtney to step down as President and allow the Senate Pro Tempore to lead the Senate; and be it further

RESOLVED, We call for an outside audit of current process used in the state legislature regarding sexual harassment and abuse, and the implementation of their recommendations.

ADOPTED by the Jackson County Democratic Party on 25th day of April, 2019.

Resolution submitted by: Jackson County Platform and Resolutions Committee

Purpose

To implore the senate to address the continued concerns regarding the pervasive culture of sexual harassment and abuse within the capitol.

To ask President Courtney to step down from position of Senate President and allow the Senate Pro Tempore to take his place. Jackson County democrats believes that there was willful disregard to repeated cases swept under the rug by current leadership. Jackson County Democrats believes that men and women are equal and we stand with and believe women.

Links to background information

1. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.oregon.gov/BOLI/Pages/index.asp>
2. Selsky, A. (2018, September 01). Oregon legislators refute labor commissioner's sexual harassment claims. Retrieved from <https://www.statesmanjournal.com/story/news/2018/09/01/oregon-legislators-refute-labor-commissioners-sexual-harassment-claim/1175270002/>
3. Associated Press. (n.d.). Governor: Oregon lawmaker accused of groping should resign. Retrieved from <https://katu.com/news/local/governor-oregon-lawmaker-accused-of-groping-should-resign>
4. Friedman, G. (2018, February 08). Kruse to resign after finding of groping, unwanted touching at Oregon Capitol. Retrieved from https://www.oregonlive.com/politics/2018/02/kruse_resigns_after_finding_of.html
5. Jaquiss, N., Jaquiss, N., About Nigel Jaquiss News, & Willamette Week. (n.d.). Labor Commissioner Issues Damning Final Report On Sexual Harassment in Oregon Capitol. Retrieved from <https://www.wweek.com/news/2019/01/03/labor-commissioner-issues-damning-final-report-on-sexual-harassment-in-oregon-capitol/?fbclid=IwAR2dCcjuYARlW15K6sJravV4Gv8zPHR69H9tDjFkid86TV046yZrDVZnOI>
6. VanderHart, D., & Dake, L. (2019, January 06). Investigation: Sexual Harassment Made Oregon's Capitol A Hostile Workplace. Retrieved from <https://www.opb.org/news/article/oregon-capitol-sexual-harassment-hostile-workplace/?fbclid=IwAR0faBSLuEmnF1SC9xJMGBJZY6Yxumy2Q3Hy2eAxxzDGw8-b3vYhXLXYZI>
7. Jaquiss, N., Jaquiss, N., About Nigel Jaquiss News, & Willamette Week. (n.d.). Senior Aide To Sen. President Peter Courtney Abruptly Resigns the Day Before Lawmakers Convene. Retrieved from <https://www.wweek.com/news/2019/01/13/senior-aide-to-sen-president-peter-courtney-abruptly-resigns-the-day-before-lawmakers-convene/>
8. Columnist, G. (2019, March 02). Opinion: Sen. Steiner Hayward doesn't speak for all Capital sexual harassment victims. Retrieved from <https://www.oregonlive.com/opinion/2019/03/opinion-sen-steiner-hayward-doesnt-speak-for-all-capitol-sexual-harassment-victims.html>

This Resolution will be sent to each of the officials named below,

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Senator Jeff Golden - District 3



Tonia Moro,
Chair Jackson County Democratic Party

Date