

CC 2019-001 Regarding Leadership and Ineffective Handling of Sexual Harassment Complaints
in the Oregon Legislature

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

(B) 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;

(C) WHEREAS, Senate President Peter Courtney and House Speaker Tina Kotek co-chair the Legislative Administration Committee which is responsible for managing personnel;

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

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

(F) WHEREAS, student interns subjected to sexual harassment in the legislature reported being misled regarding legal options to pursue recourse and they fear an end to their careers if they come forward; and

(G) 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;

THEREFORE, We the Washington County Democratic Central Committee (WCDCC) of Oregon, Resolve as follows:

1. We support people reporting harassment and abuse, protection of their privacy while doing so, and thorough investigations of all reports;
2. We condemn any efforts to silence people reporting sexual harassment, bullying or intimidating, or to inhibit or obscure their ability and understanding of available legal remedies; and
3. We support the findings and recommendation of the Oregon Law Commission report by the Oregon State Capitol Workplace Harassment Work Group. We support the timely implementation of their recommendations.

Resolution submitted by Farrah Chaichi, R&PC Member – September 2, 2018

Approved by R&PC – September 4, 2018

Sent back to Committee by Central Committee – October 28, 2018

Amended and Approved by R&PC – January 15, 2019

Amended and Approved by Central Committee – January 23, 2019

<https://www.opb.org/news/article/oregon-legislature-hostile-workplace-sexual-harassment-accusation/>

<https://www.oregonlive.com/expo/news/erry-2018/08/054cbcb825758/labor-commissioner-accuses-ore.html>

<https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/4627115/080118-Commissioners-Complaint.pdf>

https://www.nrtoday.com/oregon-legislature-pushes-back-against-sexual-harassment-investigation/article_191ff433-e84d-53c4-b6d9-4d13f312ded8.html

<https://www.opb.org/news/article/oregon-legislature-sexual-harassment-complaint-response-boli/>