

RESOLUTION URGING THE CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE TO BETTER PROTECT LEGISLATIVE STAFF FROM SEXUAL HARASSMENT

WHEREAS reported incidents suggest that harassment, discrimination, and retaliation have continued to occur within the California Legislature well past Sacramento's 2017 #MeToo reckoning, due to its failure to institute sufficiently effective practices of oversight, independence, administrative process, transparency, and accountability, to address inappropriate behavior and protect survivors and vulnerable staffers; and

WHEREAS the Santa Clara County Democratic Party believes all people have a right to work in a safe environment that is free from harassment, and to have access to effective and transparent processes to address incidents of harassment and which impose meaningful consequences on those who engage in or facilitate harassment; and

WHEREAS we support the employees of the California Legislature who have reported harassment, discrimination, and retaliation and/or who have not been protected adequately by the California Legislature's Workplace Conduct Unit (WCU) put in place as part of the Legislature's post-2017 reforms;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Santa Clara County Democratic Party calls on the California Legislature and its leaders to (1) appoint and empower an independent and impartial body, not beholden to, controlled by, or in any relationship of privilege or other fiduciary duty to the California Legislature or its leaders, to investigate with full transparency the reported failures of the WCU and to make changes in the organization, structure, powers, independence, and staffing of the WCU as deemed necessary to protect legislative staff members more effectively, (2) adopt legislation and change administrative rules of the WCU and the California Legislature as needed to provide greatly increased transparency into the WCU and its work, including cases in which the WCU finds allegations not to be substantiated, (3) ensure timely investigation and resolution of complaints by the WCU and timely referral of complaints by supervisors to the WCU, (4) provide for complainants to participate and be represented by an advocate in all investigations, (5) protect complainants against retaliation by the person accused of harassment, their supervisors, the WCU, the member they work for, and the California Legislature, and (6) ensure accountability for those found to have engaged in sexual harassment and/or enabled such conduct, through appropriate corrective action and penalties; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution will be sent to Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon, State Senate President Pro Tem Toni Atkins, and members of the State Assembly and State Senate who represent any part of Santa Clara County.

Adopted by the Santa Clara County Democratic Central Committee on June 2, 2022