

## **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 accommodation 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 Gelser 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**, In 2001, two women at Western Oregon University said Courtney, then the assistant president at WOU, failed to act when they complained. The university paid both women settlements and their lawyer identified many more victims; (7)

**WHEREAS**: Courtney'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 Courtney's office complained of unwanted attention from a male legislative staffer of 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**: Courtney and others have systematically brushed sexual harassment complaints under the rug; (9)

**WHEREAS**: Courtney 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 Gelser has, you will be ostracized and shamed; (9)

**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, BE IT RESOLVED**: We support people reporting harassment and abuse, protection of their privacy while doing so, and thorough investigations of all reports.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**: 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.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** We call upon President Courtney to step down as President and allow the Senate Pro Tempore to lead the Senate.

**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.

**Resolution submitted by:**

Ami Fox	Lisa Ortiz	Chris Lowe
John Adams	James Davis	Michelle Risher
Michael Cojocar	Leah Gibbs	Carissa Martos
Sam Kahl	Leigha LaFleur	Melisa Crosby
Ira Erbs	Debby Schwartz	Julie DeGraw
Dan Goetz	Pablo Martos	Ethan Scarl
Lisa Wolf	John Knight	Julio Castilleja

**Purpose**

To ask President Courtney to step down from position of Senate President and allow the Senate Pro Tempore to take his place. Multnomah County democrats believes that there was willful disregard to repeated cases swept under the rug by current leadership. Multnomah 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](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=IwAR2dCcjuvARlW15K6sJravV4Gv8zPHR69H9tDjFkid86TV046yZrDVZnOI>
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.). Peter Courtney's Failure To Protect Women From Sexual Harassment Goes Back Decades. Retrieved from <https://www.wweek.com/news/2019/02/23/peter-courtneys-failure-to-protect-women-from-sexual-harassment-goes-back-decades/>
8. 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/>
9. 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,**  
State Senators

Senator Mark Hass [sen.markhass@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:sen.markhass@oregonlegislature.gov) 503-986-1714  
Senator Betsy Johnson [Sen.BetsyJohnson@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:Sen.BetsyJohnson@oregonlegislature.gov) (503) 543-4046  
Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward [sen.elizabethsteinerhayward@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:sen.elizabethsteinerhayward@oregonlegislature.gov) (503) 986-1717  
Senator Ginny Burdick [sen.ginnyburdick@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:sen.ginnyburdick@oregonlegislature.gov) (503) 986-1700  
Senator Rob Wagner [WagnerSen.RobWagner@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:WagnerSen.RobWagner@oregonlegislature.gov) 503-986-1719  
Senator Kathleen Taylor [sen.kathleentaylor@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:sen.kathleentaylor@oregonlegislature.gov) 503-986-1721  
Senator Lew Frederick [Sen.LewFrederick@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:Sen.LewFrederick@oregonlegislature.gov) 503-986-1722  
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Senator Shemia Fagan [Sen.ShemiaFagan@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:Sen.ShemiaFagan@oregonlegislature.gov) 503-986-1724  
Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson [Sen.LaurieMonnesAnderson@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:Sen.LaurieMonnesAnderson@oregonlegislature.gov) 503-986-1725  
Senator Chuck Thomsen [Sen.ChuckThomsen@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:Sen.ChuckThomsen@oregonlegislature.gov) (541) 490-4641

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