

Dear Governor Mark Dayton, Lieutenant Governor Tina Smith, Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka, Senate Minority Leader Tom Bakk, President of the Senate Michelle Fischbach, Speaker of the House Kurt Daudt, House Majority Leader Joyce Peppin, House Minority Leader Melissa Hortman, DFL Chair Ken Martin, and GOP Chair Jennifer Carnahan,

As state elected officials, party officials and candidates for elected office, we call on you to take action immediately on revelations of sexual misconduct by elected officials in the State Legislature. We request that you come together in a bipartisan way to address the culture of the legislature and campaigns and create lasting change in our workplace.

Victims of sexual harassment and assault committed by elected officials and candidates for office currently have no safeguards or protections and little to no recourse in our current system of reporting. There is no clear process for reporting, the current non-partisan entity used for reporting has no real authority to take action, there is little transparency about the process, and an abysmal record of accountability. Our current system is failing the people who work in the halls of the Capitol.

We call on you today to establish a Task Force on Sexual Harassment. The goal of the Task Force would be to establish systems of reporting and make recommendations to improve the culture of our legislative bodies and campaigns. We ask that you appoint a bipartisan group of experts in sexual harassment, human resources, public sector employment law, and employee focused employment law who will make a set of recommendations to the legislature that addresses this important workplace issue. We ask that the scope of their work include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Recommend a new process for reporting sexual misconduct of elected officials and candidates at the Capitol and the two political parties. The recommendation should consider victim privacy and public transparency.
- Research best practices regarding training on sexual harassment and workplace conduct for elected officials, candidates for office and legislative staff. Make recommendations on appropriate and effective training which sets clear expectations of professional behavior and asks legislators and employees to sign a code of conduct agreement which holds them accountable and provides options and information for employees to report inappropriate behavior.
- Create a non-partisan process, independent of either caucus, for taking reports of sexual harassment and investigating those allegations. As part of the process the investigators should make detailed reports to appropriate legislators, managers and employers. Those legislators, managers and employers should be held accountable for taking prompt and appropriate action.

Minnesota State Government should set the standard for zero tolerance of sexual harassment in the workplace. We believe that all legislators, candidates, lobbyists, and staff members should be able to work in a safe place, free of harassment, threats, or inappropriate conduct. The creation of this Task Force is a start of the hard work necessary to improve our workplace.

We propose that the task force commence work immediately. That it be composed of 8 people, two appointed by the Senate Majority Leader, two by the Senate Minority Leader, two by the Speaker of the House, two by the House Minority Leader and that it prepare its report and recommendations by January 15, 2018 so that this new process is in place when the legislative session begins.

Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Erin Maye Quade MN State House Representative
Jamie Becker Finn MN State House Representative
Lindsey Port MN State House Candidate