

New Recommendations on Strengthening Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response

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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

New Recommendations on Strengthening Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response

On Wednesday, February 28th, the San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women recognized California women who are pioneers in the #MeToo movement and urged a stronger response to sexual harassment for City and County employees.

The Commission honored Susan Fowler, Adama Iwu, and Jennifer Kwart, about whom **Commission President Debbie Mesloh** said, “Tonight’s honorees have launched a movement with the courageous act of speaking out about their personal experiences of sexual harassment. Now is the time for San Francisco to take action.”

- **Susan Fowler:** Published a viral blog post describing the sexual harassment she experienced at Uber and the complicity of the HR department and top executives who protected her harasser, leading to far-reaching corporate governance reforms at Uber and creating ripples well beyond the company.
- **Adama Iwu:** One of *TIME Magazine*’s “Silence Breakers” and co-founder of We Said Enough, penned a bipartisan letter published in the *LA Times* with over 140 signatories calling for an end to the pervasive culture of sexual harassment and assault in the California State Capitol.
- **Jennifer Kwart:** Came forward to accuse a State Senator of sexually harassing her when she was an intern in his district office in 2008 after he denied similar allegations of misconduct made by another woman.

The Commission also reviewed the Department of Human Resource’s annual report on sexual harassment complaints filed by City and County employees and recommended strategies to strengthen prevention and response. **Human Resources Director Micki Callahan** said, “The Department of Human Resources takes every complaint seriously. We require supervisors and managers to report complaints immediately. We have worked collaboratively with the Department on the Status of Women to strengthen preventive measures and to expand accountability on sexual harassment.”

With President Mesloh’s leadership and in consultation with the Department of Human Resources, the Department on the Status of Women developed the following recommendations to further improve San Francisco government’s response to sexual harassment. The recommendations now go to the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors for review.

1. **ACCOUNTABILITY:** Require that all permanent and long-term temporary City and County of San Francisco employees undergo anti-harassment training on a biennial basis. Incorporate bystander training in the course in the next cycle.
2. **ACCOUNTABILITY:** Require new employees to undergo sexual harassment training no later than 6 months after start date.
3. **ACCOUNTABILITY:** The Department of Human Resources (DHR) will post to its website completion numbers for anti-harassment training by department annually beginning January 1, 2019.
4. **CLARITY:** The nature of complaints changes over time, creating apparent inconsistencies between the number of types of complaints reported in the quarterly reports and the annual reports. DHR will explain these differences

between the quarterly report and annual report numbers in its annual reports.

5. **TRANSPARENCY:** DHR will post both the quarterly and annual reports of sexual harassment cases to its website. The Department on the Status of Women (DOSW) will post to its website these DHR reports and the City Attorney reports of settlements.
6. **TRANSPARENCY:** DHR will make the data (on claims, departments, and training) publicly available in Data SF, so that members of the public can do their own data analysis.
7. **ACCESS:** Explore expanding the reporting requirement from 180 days from the alleged incident to a year from the date of the last incident (i.e., modeled after the state regulations in the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing).
8. **ACCESS:** DOSW will provide recommendations to DHR for making the website on filing a harassment complaint as user-friendly as possible, to encourage people to file complaints.

About these recommendations, **San Francisco Department on the Status of Women Director Emily Murase** said, “We want to ensure that all City and County employees can enjoy workplaces free from sexual harassment. These recommendations will go far to strengthen the City’s mandate as an equal opportunity employer.”

The Commission’s work to strengthen the City and County’s policies on the prevention of sexual harassment follows a year-long study of sexual assault on college campuses. Like sexual assault, sexual harassment falls on the spectrum of gender-based violence, and toxic environments can lead to escalating forms of violence against women. The Commission, therefore, seeks to normalize reporting of gender-based violence and demand accountability. To that end, the Safer Schools Sexual Assault Task Force Report recommended creating an on-going Task Force with dedicated staffing to work to improve San Francisco’s response to gender-based violence. Documents and resources are available at the Department website, www.sfgov.org/dosw.

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