

TEXAS HOUSE *of* REPRESENTATIVES



JOLANDA "JO" JONES

DISTRICT 147

Dear Representative Jones,

We regret to inform you that we are submitting our formal letter of resignation.

We, as a collective of senior staff, have repeatedly attempted to curb your behavior and address the type of work environment you have bred over the last month. But, to no avail; we haven't seen any success. You have continued to endorse, encourage, and create an abusive and hostile work environment in the workplace without accountability for you or your relatives' actions.

Below, we address some of the incidents that we believe deserve your immediate attention:

- Your son, Giovanni Christian Jones, Esq. (herby Jio), is having an inappropriate
- relationship with the office TLIPer (Intern), Jessica Fuqua. His relationship with an office intern displays disrespect for the workplace and diminishes the morality of the office.
 - Jio is not only your son, but General Counsel at Elite Change Inc. (registered lobbying firm and also the financial vehicle of your campaign manager, Dallas Jones). This inappropriate relationship may constitute as sexual harassment or a conflict of interest between his office of employment and your state office.
 - You abused the power of your office by manipulating your District Director, Yesenia Wences, to falsely take the blame for you finding out that the affair had to do with Jessica Fuqua.
 - Jio threatened to state false allegations to you that Yesenia is conducting illegal business in the state office because he is reportedly angry at her. You knew Jio suffered from severe mental illness, and yet you decided to put Yesenia in harm's way.
- You have involved staff in the affairs of your personal and family life, without regard for work-life boundaries and the scope of staff's employment.
 - You ask your staff to assist in the coordination of the terminal cancer treatment of your son's father-in-law.
 - You have had your staff involve themselves in your son's legal issues and criminal charges.
 - Jio's continued prominent presence in the office, as well as his participation in staff meetings, planning and strategy meetings, and unsolicited input on office policies and political stances is a distraction and is a direct example of abuse of power. While not a member of the office staff, Jio's opinion is often held to a higher prominence than paid staff. The inappropriate relationship between your son and the Intern has caused you to listen more to subordinates than senior staff.
 - You have called staff at all hours of the night and on weekends to discuss work and to drive you from place to place.

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- Multiple times, you have demanded that staff pick you up from the airport at 12:00am or drive you to the airport at 3:30am.
- Frequent calls have been made between 9:30pm-2:00am about non-state related business
- You continue to utilize State Resources for your personal.
- Staff has coordinated meetings in the state office to discuss your personal finances and property taxes.
- You have repeatedly called staff while you are in personal situations, such as the shower.
- You have engaged in physically threatening behavior in public view that has made staff feel unsafe and compromised their ability to complete their duties. This behavior has also distracted witnesses and other staffers.
- You have threatened to fire staff members on a daily basis, holding it over their heads for compliance in ethically questionable situations.
 - You have made disparaging remarks about staffers' family members and threatened retaliation if that information is shared with the related staff members.

We are deeply troubled by the fact that you have actively covered up your son Jio's inappropriate relationship with one of our interns, who is significantly younger than him and is in a power imbalance, and are now using your position to intimidate and silence your own staff members. We cannot overlook the fact that your fear of retaliation from your son has led you to take inappropriate and unethical actions that are impacting the well-being and reputation of everyone in the office.

Specifically, we are concerned that you had your District Director, Yessenia Wences, lie to Jio about how you found out about his relationship with the intern, Jessica Fuqua, in order to avoid confrontation. Now, Jio is threatening Yessenia, a fellow colleague and your employee, for allegedly telling you about his behavior. It is not appropriate for your staff to lie to cover up your personal life, nor is it appropriate for you to allow your son to threaten and harass your staff members. This is not a good example of leadership.

Furthermore, we cannot overlook the fact that your son's behavior with Jessica is completely inappropriate, especially given that he is a lobbyist and works for your campaign manager. He should be held to a higher standard. It is concerning that you have not taken any steps to address his behavior, and instead have chosen to put everyone in the office at risk. Your son is an absolute liability, and his behavior is now affecting the livelihoods and credibility of everyone on your payroll.

It is so disappointing to see that while you build your profile on overcoming abuse, you cannot stand up to the abuser that you raised. You are holding a legal case hostage over your son's girlfriend because you allow him to

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gaslight and emotionally and physically abuse all the women in his life - work and personal - while dragging your entire office through it.

To be a good leader, you must be open, honest, and transparent. It is your responsibility to evolve and grow and manage difficult decisions. Yet, you refuse to take accountability for you and your son's actions, instead manipulating and covering up the truth for your benefit.

Public servants are meant to prioritize the public good before oneself, but you have continued to use this office as a bully pulpit to acquire more power and to protect your own self-interests. We unequivocally deny any and all of your false claims and ask that you take full responsibility for the continued mistakes attributed to yourself and to your son.

We regret to inform you that we have decided to take further action by contacting TLIP Director, Erica Lee. This decision has not been an easy one, but we feel it is necessary for our own well-being as well as our professional and personal ethics and reputations.

We accepted our positions in your office with the intent and want to serve the people of Texas and improve the lives of the HD 147 constituents. Yet, our ability to best fulfill our job duties and achieve our goals has been stifled by internal office matters and a lack of focus from our leader.

While all of the above issues have contributed to this decision, the main reason for our resignation is due to your response to the inappropriate relationship between your son and the intern. We have witnessed firsthand your unprofessional behavior and find it unacceptable. As employees of this office, we hold ourselves to a high standard of conduct and expect the same from others, especially those in positions of authority.

We have brought this issue and others to your attention on multiple occasions, but it appears that no action has been taken to address the matter. We can no longer continue to work in an environment where such toxic and unethical behavior is tolerated and condoned.

We cannot ignore the fact that this isn't the first time issues have been raised about interns in our office, and it is clear that there is a pattern of abuse of power. We cannot allow anyone to be threatened or harassed, especially in a professional setting. It is time for you to show real leadership by taking immediate action to address these issues, rather than covering them up.

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We appreciate the opportunities that we have had during our time serving HD 147, and we apologize for any inconvenience that our resignations may cause. However, we feel that it is important to stand up for what is right and maintain our integrity as professionals.

It is time you own your S.H.I.T,

—

Kory Haywood, Chief of Staff

Catherine "Cat" Mauer, Legislative Director

Yesenia Wences, District Director

