

TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



1100 Congress Avenue
Austin, TX 78701

April 26, 2021

To the Employees of the Texas House of Representatives and the Public:

In regard to the recent allegation of a sexual assault involving a Capitol staff member(s), the women of the Texas House of Representatives first and foremost want to convey our support for the staff member(s) who bravely came forward to report this crime. Removing the stigma and retaliation that has stymied such reporting is exactly what we have been working toward.

In recent years, the Legislature undertook a thorough review of our sexual harassment policies at the Capitol, resulting in a revised policy on “Appropriate Workplace Conduct” in an effort to provide a strong statement against tolerating any form of harassment, to clarify a reporting process and potential disciplinary actions, as well as to ensure prohibition on retaliation. Additionally, over the past several legislative sessions, multiple efforts have been made to center survivors in the reporting, investigation, and ultimate prosecution of sexual assault cases, including the creation of the Sexual Assault Survivors Task Force in the Governor’s Office to tie these efforts together.

The ultimate goal has been to change the culture of silence and victim blaming and, instead, create a supportive system that encourages anyone subjected to such abuses to know that they will be believed and supported through the process. It is our fervent hope that the DPS investigation that has been implemented will lead to swift resolution of this allegation and that the complainant(s) will be provided all necessary resources during the investigation, including support from the local SAFE Alliance or other victim services, as well as any workplace accommodations to ensure a safe working environment. There is also the potential for internal action as outlined in our policy that provides for an investigation by the House General Investigating Committee.

We will continue to monitor this incident and will be focused on ensuring appropriate actions are taken to support this complainant(s) and hope that this sends a clear message that we will not tolerate sexual harassment or abuse.

We believe you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donna Howard". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Donna Howard

OK FOR DISTRIBUTION

A smaller handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donna Howard", identical in style to the one above.

Open Letter of Support to Capitol Staff
April 26, 2021



Alma Allen
State Representative



Michelle Beckley
State Representative



Rhetta Bowers
State Representative



Angie Chen Button
State Representative



Liz Campos
State Representative



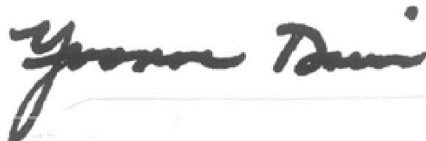
Sheryl Cole
State Representative



Nicole Collier
State Representative



Jasmine Crockett
State Representative



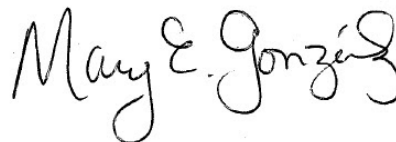
Yvonne Davis
State Representative



Barbara Gervin Hawkins
State Representative



Jessica González
State Representative



Mary González
State Representative

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Vikki Goodwin
State Representative



Ana Hernandez
State Representative



Gina Hinojosa
State Representative



Lacey Hull
State Representative




Celia Israel
State Representative



Ann Johnson
State Representative



Julie Johnson
State Representative



Terry Meza
State Representative



Ina Minjarez
State Representative

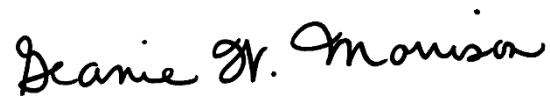


Christina Morales
State Representative



Penny Morales Shaw
State Representative

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Geanie Morrison
State Representative



Claudia Ordaz Perez
State Representative



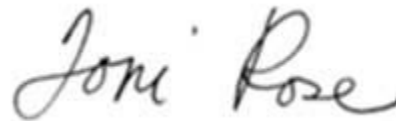
Evelina "Lina" Ortega
State Representative



Mary Ann Perez
State Representative



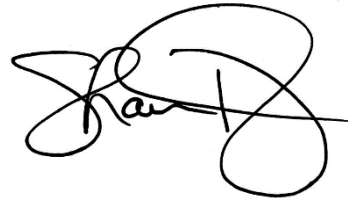
Ana-Maria Ramos
State Representative



Toni Rose
State Representative



Shelby Slawson
State Representative



Shawn Thierry
State Representative



Senfronia Thompson
State Representative



Erin Zwiener
State Representative