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# SPECIAL REPORT

## First Assembly Hearing on Sexual Harassment



### Great Start, Asm. Laura Friedman

Yesterday, the Assembly took its first step to address allegations of pervasive sexual harassment in our Capitol: a nearly 5 hour information-gathering [hearing](#) by the Rules Subcommittee on Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation Prevention and Response, chaired by Assemblywoman Laura Friedman. Here's what you may have missed.

The hearing panels included a range of perspectives. In the first panel, the

current Chair of the Rules Committee and other administrators currently responsible for fielding and managing sexual harassment complaints described procedures currently in place. In other panels, victims offered personal accounts of sexual harassment and assault, We Said Enough founders called out the “whisper network” and provided insights into their work, and expert civil rights attorneys offered guidance grounded in their years advocating for victims of sexual harassment, discrimination, and retaliation.

Asm. Friedman did outstanding work to underscore the critical need for a “serious and comprehensive” overhaul of the Assembly’s approach to sexual harassment. Two issues in particular stood out as problematic. First, the Rules Committee has thoroughly failed to track sexual harassment complaints; it critically needs a reliable records-keeping system to provide fundamental data and spotlight patterns of abuse. Second, the administrators’ tenuous understanding of “zero tolerance” and muddled definition of “sexual harassment” needs immediate clarification.

The rash of sexual harassment infecting the California Legislature makes close the gap CA’s campaign to recruit progressive women even more urgent. We can and must replace offenders with women who will set and enforce higher standards.

If you’ve been wondering what YOU can do to eliminate abusive behavior and change the institutional culture that let it fester, here is what you can do RIGHT NOW:

1. [Call your State representatives](#): Tell them you want them to make it a priority to repair this broken system. Sexual harassment, abuse, and assault have to go. Call often.
2. [Email close the gap CA](#) today and recommend women who should be recruited to run for the Assembly and Senate.
3. Ask a woman you respect to run for office.
4. Support close the gap CA’s efforts to identify, research, and recruit in open seats that result from resignations: [Donate today](#).





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**close the gap CA** is a statewide campaign to find talented, progressive women to run for open seats in the California legislature in 2018 and 2020. With focus and a targeted strategy, we can 'close the gap' and not just the gender gap. When we elect progressive women, we take steps to close the school funding gap, the access gap to affordable health and reproductive care, and the growing gap between the wealthy and those in poverty.

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