



June 12, 2018

Dear caucus leaders,

We, women of the Illinois Senate, have joined together to say, “No more, not in my state Capitol.”

Last week, a major step forward was taken in regard to ethics reform with the governor’s signature on House Bill 138.

We thank Gov. Rauner for signing this legislation, which restructures legislative ethics investigations. It is our hope that House Bill 138 will give more people the confidence to come forward and report inappropriate behavior. This is only the beginning of what we would like to see.

We want to make it abundantly clear that we are not letting down on this issue. Our work does not stop with HB 138. We will continue our legislative efforts to ensure people in positions of power, or anyone who works in the Capitol building, can no longer get away with the abuse and threats that happen all too often under the dome.

House Bill 138 was indeed a step forward, but we firmly believe an independent and transparent ethics investigation process is vital to changing the culture in Springfield. We appreciate that some of our colleagues in the House have joined our call for an independent investigation.

As members and supporters of the Senate Sexual Discrimination and Harassment Awareness and Prevention Task Force, we will continue to tackle the culture of harassment, fear and retaliation that pervades the Capitol. No one should ever fear retribution for telling their story.

Moving forward, there are several changes we would still like to see, and we fully anticipate your full support with these efforts. Some of our recommended changes include:

- Adding legislative staff to coverage under the Human Rights Act;
- Ensuring that we examine the makeup and structure of the commission.

We commend the brave women who have stepped forward and spoken out about their experiences, and we want them to know we have their backs. It takes courage to stand up to people in power and to challenge a system that has encouraged silence for too long. No one should experience sexual harassment, discrimination or intimidation because they chose to work in public service.

We encourage you, as leaders of our legislative body, to stand with us in creating an environment at the Capitol in which all people can feel comfortable. Training alone is not enough. The culture in the Statehouse must change, and we look to you to be leaders of that change.

We are committed to ensuring that those who have been sexually harassed, retaliated against or abused have greater confidence in the investigative process. This disgraceful culture must end, and those who indulge in this behavior must be held accountable. It doesn't matter if you're a legislator, staffer, or a lobbyist, it's clear that the majority of us who work in the Capitol have had enough and are standing up to anyone who conducts acts of inappropriate behavior.

Together, we are standing strong in our efforts, and we hope to receive your full support as we continue to push for a better working environment in Springfield.

It's time to change the culture.

Sincerely,



Senator Pamela Althoff



Senator Melinda Bush



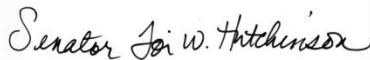
Senator Cristina Castro



Senator Jacqueline Collins




Senator Mattie Hunter



Senator Toi W. Hutchinson



Senator Kimberly A. Lightford



Senator Iris Y. Martinez



Senator Karen McConaughay



Senator Julie A. Morrison



Senator Laura M. Murphy



Senator Sue Rezin



Senator Heather Steans



Senator Jil Tracy