

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 11, 2018

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
142 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
142 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Shaheen,

As you begin work on the FY 2019 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Budget, we respectfully request that you adequately fund the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to ensure that the Commission has the resources necessary to investigate and enforce our nation's workplace anti-discrimination laws.

The EEOC is tasked with enforcing the nation's workplace anti-discrimination laws, including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Equal Pay Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and has the power to investigate discrimination charges that individuals file with the Commission.

Harassment and discrimination are unacceptable in the workplace—yet, each year, the EEOC receives thousands of complaints of workplace misconduct. In FY17 alone, it received 84,254 charges. After filing a charge, private sector complainants can expect to wait an average of 295 days for resolution from the EEOC, while federal workers can expect to wait 543 days. Furthermore, though EEOC employees, working with limited resources, have made headway in reducing the agency's complaint backlog, there were over 61,000 charges awaiting resolution at the end of FY17.

In recent months, the nation has been disturbed by high-profile cases of sexual harassment in government and the entertainment and media industries. Sexual harassment is indeed pervasive throughout our nation's workplaces: workers in the health care, manufacturing, mining, construction, agricultural, and information technology industries—among others—have experienced and reported sexual harassment to the EEOC. Roughly 30% (or 25,600) of the EEOC's FY17 charges alleged sex discrimination, 50% of which involved sexual harassment,

yet only an estimated 6% to 13% of individuals who experience harassment officially report it. As brave workers continue to come forward with allegations of sexual harassment, it is critical that the EEOC can rapidly investigate and resolve complaints, as well as conduct outreach and trainings for employers. In addition, it is essential that the EEOC has the resources necessary to prevent the harassment of low-wage workers—including farmworkers, restaurant workers, and factory workers—who face significant, unique barriers to reporting and often work in environments that leave them vulnerable to misconduct and abuse.

Furthermore, though sexual harassment has rightly received media and political attention in response to the #MeToo movement, it is critical that Congress provide the EEOC with the resources it needs to combat *all* forms of workplace harassment and discrimination, like race discrimination, which often go hand-in-hand with sex discrimination and are as pervasive throughout the workforce. In FY17 alone, for example, the EEOC received approximately 28,500 charges alleging race discrimination; nearly 26,900 alleging disability discrimination; around 18,400 alleging age discrimination; and close to 3,500 alleging discrimination on the basis of religion.

All American workers deserve to do their jobs in boardrooms, factory floors, kitchens, and office buildings without experiencing harassment and discrimination. To support workers, Congress should ensure that the EEOC is funded at levels that allow it to investigate and enforce violations of federal law. We applaud the FY18 appropriations increase for the EEOC, and urge you to continue to expand funding for the agency. By providing the EEOC with adequate funding, Congress would be sending a strong message that workplace harassment and discrimination are unacceptable. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator




Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



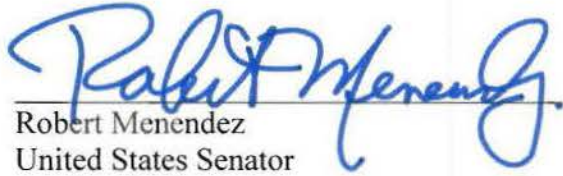
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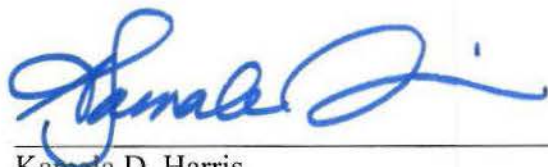
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