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WORKS IN PROGRESS

To all Democratic candidates and campaign managers,

In the last presidential race, people across the country watched in horror as then-candidate Donald Trump bragged about sexually assaulting women and then won the presidency. Since then thousands of women and their allies have taken to the streets to demand a change and dozens of abusers have been exposed and held accountable.

Now, the 2020 election cycle is already in full swing and there is a demand from voters to candidates at all levels from president to city council and more to take sexual assault and any kind of harassment seriously. **Voters want change, and for candidates to credibly carry this message they need to ensure their own workplaces--their campaigns--are safe. They must ensure they have the right practices in place to prevent sexual assault and harassment and to handle allegations when they do happen.** If progressives in particular cannot get it right in our own workplaces, we lack the moral authority to lead the country on this issue.

The following are topline guidelines pulled together by experts in the field that work with progressive groups and candidates that we encourage anyone setting up and running campaigns to review. These should be taken as exactly that, topline guidelines. To ensure your campaign is operating at the highest standard, you should consult with an expert to customize policies for your workplace. We urge you to adopt these guidelines and best practices for your campaign.

To reach the standard we need to, a “check the legally required boxes” approach does not work. Campaigns should be striving to create a safe environment with real, working systems of accountability and can use the following as a starting point.

For more information, or to get started implementing these best practices in your campaign, please contact Robyn Swirling ([robyn@weareworksinprogress.org](mailto:robyn@weareworksinprogress.org)) or Paula Brantner ([pbworksolutions@gmail.com](mailto:pbworksolutions@gmail.com)).

Sincerely,

Shaunna Thomas, Executive Director, [UltraViolet](#)

Robyn Swirling, [Works in Progress](#)

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## Guidelines for Campaigns: Preventing and Responding to Workplace Harassment and Sexual Violence

### **Prohibiting: Campaigns should adopt a clear and robust workplace harassment prevention policy that includes:**

- An explanation of prohibited conduct, including examples, which covers behavior which may not be legally actionable "harassment" and covers individuals who may not have legal protections in all jurisdictions but who are at a high risk of being targeted for harassment;
- A description of the complaint process that provides multiple, accessible, and confidential avenues of complaint;
- An assurance that the campaign will protect the confidentiality of harassment complaints to the extent possible;
- A complaint process that provides a prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation;
- A commitment to taking immediate and proportionate corrective action when it is determined that a violation of the harassment policy has occurred;
- A protection against retaliation for reporters, witnesses, and all who provide information and participate in investigations;
- A practice of sharing and discussing the policy with new staff upon onboarding in writing and electronically, posted in all campaign offices, and distributed at least monthly during the course of the campaign;
- An integrated statement or rider in all volunteer agreements and vendor contracts regarding the expectation for how to behave as part of the campaign and when interacting with other volunteers, staff, and voters, including information on how volunteers or vendors can report misconduct to the campaign.

### **Training: Campaigns should provide workplace harassment prevention training with the following qualities:**

- Research-based, in-person or live online, and interactive;
- Customized for the campaign work environment by confidential and anonymous climate surveys conducted in advance;
- Includes workplace civility and bystander intervention techniques;
- Jointly and separately addresses managers and non-managerial staff, ensuring that managers are trained in responding effectively to harassment that they observe, that is reported to them, or of which they have knowledge or information, and that non-managerial staff have an opportunity to freely share relevant information to enhance training efficacy;



- Conducted at least annually for all permanent employees, during onboarding/office openings for new employees, and integrated into other employee training as often as practical.

**Reporting: Campaigns should provide a multi-faceted and confidential workplace harassment reporting process** that includes:

- Multiple points of contact: reporting to senior managers, human resources, and third party/external reporting;
- A range of reporting methods not limited to “official” complaints submitted in writing and which permits acting upon anonymous complaints;
- Geographic and organizational diversity permitting local and headquarters reporting;
- Third party/external reporting ideally facilitated by someone not currently affiliated with campaign or whose role is to limit liability;
- Periodic testing to ensure reporting system is working.

**Investigating: Campaigns should investigate harassment reports** according to the following principles:

- Investigation protocols should be transparent so those who report know what the investigative process will entail;
- Investigators should be well-trained, objective, and neutral, especially where investigators are internal company employees;
- Investigations should ideally be conducted by a third party/external investigator with prior training in workplace investigations;
- Investigations should be conducted in a timely and expedited fashion, initiated as quickly as possible after harassment is reported;
- Investigations should protect the privacy of both the harmed party and the responsible party to the greatest extent possible, consistent with legal obligations and conducting a thorough, effective investigation;
- Investigators should document all steps taken from the point of first contact, prepare a written report using guidelines to weigh credibility, and communicate the determination to all relevant parties;
- Investigators should find the factual allegation in a harassment report “credible” if it more-likely-than-not occurred.



**Resolving: Campaigns should resolve verified harassment complaints** in the following manner:

- Where harassment or other misconduct is found to have occurred, the campaign will take immediate and proportionate corrective action. Such action should not create a burden on the person(s) harmed by the harassment, such as a reassignment of duties or location that the person did not request;
- The campaign will communicate the outcome of the investigation to those individuals requesting a harassment investigation, disclosing whether the allegations were found credible, and if so, whether corrective action was taken;
- Campaigns shall not require as a condition of employment nondisclosure agreements relating to harassment or employee misconduct nor require forced arbitration in order to adjudicate matters related to harassment or employee misconduct;
- Campaigns should internally track all reporting channels, investigations and their outcome, and all corrective actions taken to ensure that discipline is prompt, consistent and proportionate to the severity of the infraction, without giving or creating the appearance of undue favor to any particular employee.

**Funding: Campaigns must support a comprehensive workplace harassment and sexual violence prevention strategy with money and time as an essential, non-negotiable part of the campaign's allocation of resources.**

- The candidate and campaign leadership must back up its statement of urgency about preventing harassment with two of the most important commodities in a workplace: money and time.
- Campaign staff must believe that candidates and their campaign leadership are authentic in demanding a workplace free of harassment. Nothing speaks to that credibility more than what gets paid for in a budget and what gets scheduled on a calendar.
- Complaint procedures and investigations must be adequately funded in the campaign's budget, and sufficient time must be allocated from staff and volunteer schedules to ensure appropriate execution of the policies is considered a priority.
- Sufficient resources must be allotted to procure training. Trainings must be provided frequently, and sufficient time must be allocated from staff and volunteer schedules so that all campaign staff can attend these trainings.