[REPORT] To read the State of Minnesota Executive Branch “Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy and Procedures Report,” visit the Minnesota Management and Budget website.

For Immediate Release:
January 26, 2017

Minnesota Management and Budget Releases Report and Recommendations Following Review of State Sexual Harassment Policies and Procedures

ST. PAUL – Today, following an extensive review of sexual harassment policies and procedures, Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) released the State of Minnesota Executive Branch “Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy and Procedures Report,” which includes key recommendations for how the State of Minnesota can make state government workplaces more safe and inclusive for all employees. The report was completed at the request of Governor Mark Dayton, who issued a directive to MMB Commissioner Myron Frans this past November.

“There is no place in our workplaces for sexual harassment. Every employee deserves a work environment that is safe, respectful, and supportive. To all state employees who have experienced harassment in the workplace, we see you. We hear you. We will do better,” Commissioner Myron Frans said. “This report is an important first step in assessing our workplace culture and putting forth recommendations on how to prevent sexual harassment, as well as how to better address a complaint if and when one is filed. We must do everything we can to ensure state employees feel informed, safe, supported, and empowered to report sexual harassment if and when it occurs. I look forward to working with my fellow commissioners in implementing the report’s recommendations.”

The report found that while the State of Minnesota’s Executive Branch has a strong state policy prohibiting sexual harassment, more work can be done to improve the state’s workplace culture, increase consistency of training processes, and provide state employees additional resources for preventing and reporting sexual harassment.

In response to the report, Chai Feldblum, Commissioner of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission said, "As an individual Commissioner of the EEOC, I am gratified to see that Minnesota Management and Budget took a serious look at the June 2016 report I co-authored with my colleague Victoria Lipnic, and that they built many of the report's finding into their recommendations."
The Report’s recommendations focus on centralizing and streamlining reporting processes, expanding communications and training for state employees, managers and directors, and increasing accountability for the implementation of the state’s sexual harassment policy.

Recommendations from the comprehensive report include:

1. Create an independent, centralized office to receive reports of sexual harassment, conduct investigations, and enforce consistent application of the policy and procedures across the executive branch.
2. Provide and routinely require expanded, multifaceted training on the sexual harassment prevention policies, procedures, and issues peripherally related to creating an inclusive and respectful workplace. The training should be entwined with a broader communication strategy to reinforce and engage employees.
3. Hire and retain more diverse senior leaders and managers, and ensure all senior leaders and managers support a more inclusive culture, act to prevent sexual harassment, and respond appropriately when it occurs.
4. Implement a robust communication plan to educate and remind all employees of the sexual harassment prevention policy, procedures, and training and highlight resources available in creating a more inclusive and respectful workplace. The communication plan should specifically include a comprehensive all-employee survey with routine follow-up and evaluation of progress and a statewide communications toolkit to provide resources uniformly across all agencies.
5. Expand sexual harassment reporting options for employees, including studying the creation of an external hotline.
6. Expand resources for enhancing a culture of respect in the workplace through employee resource groups, diversity speaking engagements, and cultural competency training.
7. Update the statewide Sexual Harassment Prohibited Policy to include guidance on the roles and responsibilities of those who witness the sexual harassment of others.
8. Develop senior leadership and management accountability for the implementation of the sexual harassment prevention policy and procedures and achieving the goal of a more respectful workplace through separate management training, evaluation through reporting to the governor, measurement through performance reviews, and support the role of affirmative action officers as integral to the sexual harassment reporting process and in achieving the goals of an inclusive work environment.
9. Regularly review agency sexual harassment prevention policies, procedures, and reporting. Ensure strong internal controls by monitoring for changes and deficiencies and make adjustments when needed.
10. Propose law changes that will allow more transparency into the process for those who report sexual harassment.

“The State of Minnesota is taking a strong stand against sexual harassment. The report issued today will serve as an important tool in ensuring that our workplace culture reflects the highest professional standards Minnesotans expect from their government and that the people we serve deserve,” said Department of Human Services Commissioner Emily Piper, a member of the Administration’s working group.

While much of the research and conversation related to the report centered on sexual harassment, MMB recommends to Governor Dayton that prevention of all forms of protected class harassment and discrimination be included in state efforts whenever possible to accomplish the executive branch goal of creating a more inclusive and diverse workforce.

Neither the judicial nor the legislative branches of state government are included in this report.

To prepare the report, the State of Minnesota assembled a first-of-its-kind working group of senior leadership across the Administration, empowered by Governor Dayton to do a comprehensive top-to-bottom review of the state’s existing policies and procedures. This working group reviewed what dynamics unique to state government present challenges in providing consistent and effective processes and procedures for sexual harassment prevention. This panel included:

- Emily Piper, Department of Human Services Commissioner
- Cynthia Bauerly, Department of Revenue Commissioner
- Tom Roy, Department of Corrections Commissioner
- Mona Dohman, Department of Public Safety Commissioner
- Shawntera Hardy, Department of Employment and Economic Development Commissioner
- Major General Jon Jensen, Minnesota National Guard

Additionally, MMB engaged key stakeholders inside and outside state government to provide an objective review of our policies and procedures, and to field input on recommendations for their improvement. These organizations included:

- Minnesota Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans
- Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs
- Minnesota Indian Affairs Council
- Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage
- State Services for the Blind
- Commission of Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans
- Ombudsman Office for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities
Next Steps

In the coming weeks, MMB will prepare a proposal to present to the Governor Dayton regarding statutory changes and necessary appropriation requests to implement the recommendations. By working with the Governor and the Legislature, the state can better address the multifaceted issues related to preventing sexual harassment in the state’s workforce.

Visit the Minnesota Management and Budget website to read the State of Minnesota Executive Branch “Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy and Procedures Report.”

Press Briefing

Commissioner Frans and Department of Human Services Commissioner Piper will hold a press briefing to detail the findings and recommendations of the report at 11:00 a.m.

Members of the media that are unable to attend may email Communications Director Keith Hovis (keith.hovis@state.mn.us) for call-in information.


Who: MMB Commissioner Myron Frans and DHS Commissioner Emily Piper

When: Friday, January 26, 2017 at 11:00 a.m.

Where: Governor’s Cabinet Room, Ground Floor, State Capitol, 75 Rev Drive Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard, St Paul, MN 55155

Contact: Keith Hovis, Minnesota Management & Budget
Director of Communications
651-259-3666, Keith.Hovis@state.mn.us