



April 19, 2021

Office of the House Speaker
900 Court St NE Room 269
Salem, OR 97301

Madam Speaker,

In light of the conclusion from the House Committee on Conduct Friday, I am writing to request additional safety measures be put in place that Rule 27 promises a victim like myself. This is to establish a true “no contact” order that the current actions taken by the Conduct Committee and Speaker’s Office have failed to ensure.

Rule 27 exists to protect people when they present evidence of egregious behavior that is carried out against them or any interaction they observe. The events of last Monday demonstrated a clear abuse of power and sexual harassment from one elected official with seniority and power over another.

Despite the current measures, I argue additional interim safety measures are required in order to address the hostile work environment that exists while the investigation is conducted.

During the Conduct Committee’s hearing on Friday, the independent investigator recommended Representative Witt be removed as Chair from the House Ag and Natural Resource Committee and that a no contact order be issued. I felt betrayed when arguments were made to oppose the recommendation to remove Representative Witt as Chair. In thinking of the interactions that would be required of us, I knew the restrictions would not be enough to ensure my safety from his inappropriate advances. I am thankful for the action that was announced today to correct that decision and appoint a new Chair for the time being.

However, it will be impossible to enforce a no contact order while we serve on the same committees. Representative Tawna Sanchez argued during the hearing that because committees are virtual, it should not be a problem for a victim to interact with their harasser. I strongly disagree. A hostile work environment is made worse in a virtual world.

VIKKI BREESE-IVERSON
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 55

To fully comply with the “no contact” order of the Conduct Committee, you must immediately temporarily remove him from all committees that we serve on together.

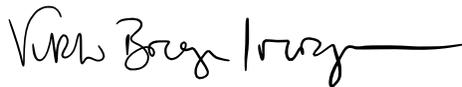
I expected Rule 27 to protect my right to a safe working environment when I came forward, and to that end I request that you follow through with Section 13 C by also establishing the interim safety measures outlined by Section 13 A and B. Otherwise, this no contact order offers no real protection. If you ignore these safety measures, Rule 27 does nothing to establish the safe, respectful and inclusive workplace we are all promised.

The fact Representative Witt chose to sexually harass me leaves us no room for any future ability to have real discussions regarding committee business or other House Floor business. The quid-pro-quo he texted me is an inexcusable abuse of his power. Experiencing this sexual harassment is something I should not have to be exposed to or accept as a course of business, especially in today’s Capitol culture.

The events of Monday created a hostile work environment; we all agreed with the passage of Rule 27 to stand up against such behavior and hold ourselves accountable.

I was elected by the people of House District 55 to be their voice in Salem during this critical time of our 81st Legislative Session. My constituents deserve my full attention and best efforts that means the “no contact” order must be fully honored. You must not protect the aggressor. Now is the time to do better.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vikki Breese-Iverson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Vikki Breese-Iverson
State Representative, District 55