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CALIFORNIA

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## Comments on City Council Motion (C.F. 17-1286) on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Please find comments below from the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) on City Council Motion (C.F. 17-1286) on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace.

### General Comments:

- The CSW applauds the adopted Motion and looks forward to further collaborate with Councilmembers and City Departments on its implementation.
- While the Motion constitutes an important step to address the issue, sexual harassment can only be eliminated if we address it comprehensively, engage all stakeholders, and hold each other accountable. Therefore, the CSW encourages Councilmembers and City Departments to continue to raise awareness about sexual harassment in the workplace and build its capacity to apply a gender-sensitive approach to the design, implementation, and evaluation of all internal and external City programs and services.

### Detailed Comments:

- With revelations of sexual harassment emerging daily from every corner of the workforce and the #MeToo Campaign continuing to gain strength in alarming numbers, the culture of silence is changing to a culture empowerment. The CSW applauds that and believes the reporting hotlines can lead to the increasing transparency that is giving people, both male and female, the power to speak out. As we move forward, the CSW would like clarification on the questions below:
  - What is the purpose of the website?
  - What support and services will the victims be offered after they have filed a complaint?
  - What will the City do with the information?
- The CSW embraces the effort to reexamine the City's sexual harassment policy and will eagerly help the City review its policies. In this process, the CSW encourage City Council and City Departments to develop measures to better address implicit gender bias, i.e., attitudes and associations that people may consciously deny, reject, or be unaware of, oftentimes because they are perceived to be customary or normal behavior. Examples of implicit gender bias are:

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- Supportive discouragement, meaning that women are encouraged to succeed in general, but face numerous obstacles in their path, intended to limit or derail their progress, such as non-flexible work hours.
  - Liberated sexism, meaning that equality is presumed, however, in practice, men's freedom increases while women's workload increases. “Liberated” women, in this sense, have two jobs, one in the home and one outside the home.
  - Collegial exclusion, meaning that women are made to feel invisible or unimportant through physical, social, or professional isolation. Such behavior typically prevents women from being promoted in workplaces where the manager level are over-represented by men.
- The CSW supports the proposal to instruct the Personnel Department to report the number of sexual harassment complaints in the last five years to Council by Department and suggest that the Personnel Department:
    - Establish a team to field complaints,
    - Aggregate the data by year, department, and gender,
    - Continue to report annually on the issue, and
    - Make a commitment to developing a strategy and dedicated resources to address the issues that arise.
  - The CSW extends its assistance to the Personnel Department in providing comments and recommendations on its design and implementation of a survey asking City employees about sexual harassment should the proposal take effect.