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## *31 Years of Feminism* *From Marching in the Streets to a Seat at the Table*

March 26, 2019

Honorable Lorena Gonzalez  
State Capitol, P.O. Box 942849, Sacramento, CA 94249-0080  
Email: Shubhangi.domokos@asm.ca.gov

**RE: AB 171 (Gonzalez) Employment: sexual harassment- SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Gonzalez,

On behalf of the Santa Barbara Women's Political Committee (SBWPC), I am writing to express support for AB 171 prohibiting an employer from discharging, discriminating or retaliating against an employee who is a victim of sexual harassment. SBWPC's mission is dedicated to furthering gender equality and other feminist values through political and social action and educational activities. Our organization is one of the largest women's political committees in Santa Barbara County with well over 300 members. We advocate for a diverse set of positions which include equal protection under the law for all people ... pertaining to civil and human rights (<https://sbwpc.org/positions/>).

We support AB 171 because it provides needed protection for workers, particularly historically "hidden figures." The Consumer Attorneys of California argue that "...the bill will establish workforce protections against discrimination and retaliation against victims of sexual harassment that is especially pervasive amongst low-wage workforces." (Assembly Judiciary Committee analysis). Additionally, the California Employment Lawyers Association finds that while fear of retaliation affects all workers, it is "even more acute for low wage workers who do not have the financial resources to absorb such consequences." (ibid.)

The bill focuses on three variables. It prohibits an employer from discharging, discriminating or retaliating against an employee because of the employee's status as a victim of sexual harassment; it adopts the Fair Employment and Housing Act's definition of harassment that provides that the conduct of other employees or nonemployees may be actionable harassment; and, if an employer takes specific actions against an employee, establishes a rebuttable presumption within 90 days following the date that the victim provides notice to the employer or the employer has actual knowledge of the status of unlawful retaliation.

Simply stated, SBWPC is aware that, regarding sexual harassment, AB 171 provides necessary protection and empowerment for employees and mitigates fear of retaliation including loss of employment.

The Santa Barbara Women's Political Committee regards AB 171 as an important step forward worker protection and fairness. **Therefore, SBWPC wishes to sign on as a supporter of AB 171.**

Thank you for reviewing our organization's position on this issue. Should you wish to communicate further with us, please email us at [info@sbwpc.org](mailto:info@sbwpc.org) or visit our website: [www.sbwpc.org](http://www.sbwpc.org).

Sincerely,

Luz Reyes-Martin, President SBWPC

CC: Assemblymember Monique Limón, Email: jimmy.wittrock@asm.ca.gov  
Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson, Email: fernando.ramirez@asm.ca.gov

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