



United States Senate

KAMALA D. HARRIS | U.S. Senator for California

Combating Sexual Harassment in Science Act of 2019

Provides for research to better understand the causes and consequences of sexual harassment in STEM fields, examine policies to reduce harassment, and encourage interagency efforts in these matters.

Background:

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine concludes that sexual harassment is pervasive in institutions of higher education and contributes to loss of talented, highly-trained individuals in the STEM workforce.

- Women who are members of racial or ethnic minority groups are more likely to experience sexual harassment and to feel unsafe at work than members of other groups.
- Reporting procedures with respect to such harassment are inconsistent among Federal science agencies.
- Without adequate reporting procedures, harassers may continue to receive Federal funding even after moving institutions.

Bill Summary:

- The Senate version is an amended version of the *Combating Sexual Harassment in Science Act of 2019* (H.R.36), introduced by Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson.
- Creates a new grant program through the National Science Foundation (NSF) to better understand the factors contributing to, and consequences of, sexual harassment, and examine interventions.
- Directs Federal statistical agencies to gather national data on the prevalence, nature, and implications of harassment in higher education.
- Directs NSF to enter into an agreement with the Academies and update professional standards of conduct in research, evidence-based practices for fostering a climate intolerant of harassment, and methods for identifying and addressing incidents.

- Establishes an Interagency Working Group for the purpose of coordinating Federal science agency efforts to reduce the prevalence of sexual harassment involving grant personnel.
- Authorizes \$17.4 million a year to carry out the Act, following recommendations by NSF and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

Endorsements: The American Educational Research Association, American Mathematical Society, American Physical Society, Society of Women Engineers, among others.