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Moisés García

San Francisco Democratic Party
1390 Market Street, Suite 200
San Francisco, CA 94102

(415) 226-9771
info@sfdemocrats.org
www.sfdemocrats.org



Contact Information

Chair Nancy Tung
nancy@sfdems.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

San Francisco Democratic Party Forms Special Committee on Sexual Assault and Harassment In Response to Allegations in SF Political Community

San Francisco, CA - April 26, 2024 — Newly elected Chair of the San Francisco Democratic Party Nancy Tung today announced the immediate creation of the Special Committee on Sexual Assault and Harassment in the San Francisco Political Community in response to recent public allegations of sexual impropriety by individuals in the San Francisco political community.

"It is of paramount importance that our political spaces are also safe spaces," said Chair Tung. "As Chair, I am committed to addressing these issues in a survivor-centric way to create a political environment free from sexual assault and harassment."

The urgency of the committee's creation, so soon after the swearing in of the new San Francisco Democratic County Central Committee (DCCC) members last Friday, was made in response to serious allegations against an individual who is active in the San Francisco political community and a recent second allegation against a current president of a chartered Democratic club. The San Francisco Women's Political Committee has been at the forefront of raising these issues to the DCCC, and will help collect information and provide recommendations to the Special Committee.

"Sexual violence in politics is all too common and only festers when it remains in the shadows. San Franciscans deserve a political community that transparently evaluates allegations of sexual misconduct and uses research-backed, trauma-informed accountability interventions to interrupt cycles of violence," said Ruth Ferguson, Co-Founder of Stop Sexual Harassment in Politics (SHIP).

The new committee is being formed in an effort to provide a platform for residents, community members, and representatives of chartered Democratic clubs to provide information about instances of sexual assault and harassment in San Francisco political communities. The Committee will be chaired by Tung. DCCC members Emma Heiken, Trevor Chandler, Bilal Mahmood, Lily Ho, Michela Alioto-Pier, and Carrie Barnes will serve on the committee.

"As new members of the San Francisco Democratic Party, we were elected on a mandate of change, and one of the issues we heard consistently was ensuring accountability for all abusers within the political system," said member Bilal Mahmood. "In prioritizing accountability, we believe this new committee can start a process towards substantive and permanent reforms within the party to ensure that it can be a safe space for all."

"As a young woman, often the only female at the table for most of my career, I'm proud to be working with colleagues that are serious about changing the culture of misogyny," says newly elected member Lily Ho.

"For too long predators have used a broken status quo to shield themselves from accountability in San Francisco politics, their time is up. I'm proud to work alongside Chair Tung and my colleagues on this important work." Says newly elected member Trevor Chandler.

"The Democratic Party should be the party that respects women's bodies, women's choices, and women's rights. In San Francisco, we should be embodying these values, not undermining them," said Vice Chair Emma Heiken.

The committee will collect information that will help guide reforms within the San Francisco Democratic Party that can ensure safety and security for San Francisco Democrats and other community members that are engaging in political spaces. The reforms could potentially include protocols for reporting cases of sexual assault and harassment, censure against individuals who are found to have committed the allegations, and potential sanctions against chartered Democratic clubs that do not comply with standards within the Code of Conduct.

The Committee will hold its first meeting on May 2, 2024, at 6:30 pm at the State Building, 455 Golden Gate Avenue, in the Milton Marks Auditorium in an effort to begin taking public testimony and comment on these issues. More details to follow.

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