



**Office of
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For Immediate Release

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**Representative Kane supports House rules changes
strengthening protections against discrimination and sexual
harassment**

BOSTON – Taking a strong stance against discrimination and harassment in the workplace, State Representative Hannah Kane, R- Shrewsbury, joined with her colleagues to approve a new series of rules that clearly define the House’s policies on sexual harassment.

The new rules set uniform standards and procedures for reporting, investigating, and punishing incidents of harassment at the State House, while providing a guarantee of confidentiality for those who report violations and implementing safeguards so they will not be subject to retaliation by their accusers. The rules changes – which apply to all of the House’s elected members, appointed officers, employees and interns – were approved on March 15.

“The House delivered a strong message today against sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination, and in support of maintaining high professional standards of conduct for legislators and state employees,” said Representative Kane. “No one should ever have to work in a hostile environment or fear that they might lose their job for reporting inappropriate behavior.”

The new rules provide for the creation of three new positions within the House of Representatives, including an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Officer, a Director of Human Resources, and a Director of Employee Engagement.

The EEO Officer, who will be appointed by the House Rules Committee to a two-year term, will be responsible for reviewing and investigating all complaints of harassment or retaliation, and for recommending disciplinary, remedial, or preventative action when appropriate. The EEO Officer will have up to 90 days to conduct an investigation and file a report on their findings and recommendations.

The Director of Human Resources, who will also be appointed by the House Rules Committee to a two-year term, will be responsible for developing and overseeing standards for both current and prospective employees. In addition to establishing a standard employment application and mandatory background and reference checks for potential hires, the Director of Human

Resources will also develop guidelines for employee performance reviews, discipline, and separations from employment.

The Director of Employee Engagement, who will be appointed by the House Committee on Personnel and Administration, will work with the Director of Human Resources to develop ways to enhance the skills and professional development of all House employees, and to engage these employees in roundtable discussions on issues of importance or concern.

The new rules also contain provisions to address potential conflicts of interest involving the EEO Officer. If a complaint is filed against the EEO Officer or one of their appointees, House Counsel will conduct the investigation in consultation with the Director of Human Resources. If the EEO Officer believes they cannot objectively assess a complaint, House Counsel will either conduct the investigation or refer the complaint to outside counsel.

The rules changes will take effect immediately.

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