

December 4, 2017

The Honorable Ken Cooley
Chair, Assembly Rules Committee
State Capitol Room
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assembly Member Cooley,

I am writing to report that I was sexually assaulted by Assembly Member Dababneh.

It is not my intention to report every detail of what happened in this letter, but here is a brief description.

On January 16, 2016, Mr. Dababneh and I were two of the many invited guests at a party to celebrate two mutual friends who were planning to get married. Most of the guests in attendance were political professionals, including many colleagues and associates I have known for years. I should have had no reason to fear for my safety. When I went to the bathroom after being at the party for a few hours, I felt the weight of a body push me into the restroom. I heard the door slam behind us. When I turned around, I saw that it was Matt Dababneh. He stood blocking the door and began to masturbate and move toward me, urging me to touch him. It was a terrifying experience. During the time he blocked me in that room, my instincts were focused on escaping without any physical contact and in a way that would not cause a scene. Before the ordeal ended, he told me not to tell anyone.

Although a number of press reports have placed this event in Sacramento, it actually occurred at a private venue inside a Las Vegas Hotel. I went along with the assumption that it happened in Sacramento because I realized that correcting this assumption would likely have led to the identification of Mr. Dababneh and I was not ready to take this step. I wish I could have corrected this error sooner, but until I heard directly from the members of the Assembly Subcommittee during the hearing held last week that they are committed to protecting victims, I was not ready to name the perpetrator.

For nearly two years, I have lived in fear that I will be shunned or retaliated against if my professional community learns that I was sexually assaulted by a lawmaker. And that fear caused me to remain silent, instead of seeking justice through formal channels in the legislature. My fear comes not only from the perpetrator's instruction not to tell, but also from the lack of a trustworthy system in the state house for investigating reports of sexual harassment and holding those who commit it accountable, regardless of their position.

At the November 28th hearing held by the Assembly Rules Subcommittee on Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation Prevention and Response, you encouraged women to step forward with a promise that perpetrators would be held accountable. I still fear that I will be retaliated against. But I am stepping forward. Victims stepping forward deserve protection from

retaliation and intimidation. I am filing this report even though, through his attorney, Mr. Dababneh has tried to silence me by threatening to sue me for defamation if I persisted in reporting this assault. If you are true to your word, the Assembly will exercise its power to stop Mr. Dababneh from abusing his, including by trying to intimidate a witness. I stand ready to cooperate, and I look forward to hearing how you propose to fix the broken investigative and disciplinary process and protect me from retaliation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pamela Lopez', written in a cursive style.

Pamela Lopez

cc: Assembly Member Laura Friedman, Chairwoman, Assembly Rules Subcommittee on Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation Prevention and Response
Assembly Member Marie Waldron, Vice Chairwoman, Assembly Rules Subcommittee on Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation Prevention and Response