

**January 21, 2020**

**The following statement was issued by state Senator Mallory McMorrow (D-Royal Oak) and included in her official sexual harassment complaint:**

Today, I am filing a formal report with the Senate Business Office regarding sexual harassment I experienced from Pete Lucido.

On November 8, 2018, I attended New Senator Orientation in Lansing. During a break after sexual harassment training, I walked over and introduced myself to then-Senator-elect Pete Lucido. He reached out to shake my hand, and with the other hand, held very low on my back, with fingers grazing my hip and upper rear. He asked what my name was and where I was from. After a bit of back and forth, he asked, "Who'd you run against?" I responded, "I beat Marty Knollenberg." At that moment, still holding his hand on my low back, he looked me up and down, raised his eyebrows, and said, "I can see why."

In that moment, my heart sank. I felt clenched and small. In that moment, this man looked at me with little interest to my background or experience, and I felt like nothing more than an object. The implication, clearly, was "You won because of what you look like."

It didn't matter, in that moment, that I had just come off of running a competitive campaign for a year and half, nor that I'd quit my job to run full time, nor the career I'd built in the automotive, product design, and media industries. It didn't matter what I'd done or who I was, or how suited I was for this job. In a split second, I was reduced to a piece of meat.

Although I was shocked by the encounter, I certainly didn't want to show it. I laughed it off, walked away, and sat back down.

As the sexual harassment training portion of orientation went on, Lucido posited different scenarios in which potential sexual harassment encounters could occur, commenting, "The culture is what it around here. We can't change that."

That evening, I went home and told my husband what had happened. I was upset, and severely deflated from my first encounter with a new colleague: someone years my senior with years experience in the legislature as an elected official and the callous, degrading way I was treated.

But at the time, my personal calculations led me to internalize the encounter and not say anything. In my analysis, I was a new Senator who had flipped a district against a sitting incumbent. I knew that many of my colleagues had actively fundraised and campaigned against me, and that I already faced an uphill battle to build relationships, knowing I'd need those relationships if I'd have any hope of passing any legislation. In my mind, I was already a bit of a target, and while my interaction with Lucido was degrading and embarrassing, I didn't view it as "enough" to warrant a report. The pros of reporting didn't outweigh the potential negative ramifications as a new Senator in the minority party, in a flipped district, as the youngest member of the Senate.

After the events of this past week, I've made the decision that it's time to come forward. As a sitting Senator, I know my story will carry weight. I hope it will show that Senator Lucido's behavior is not a one-off, misunderstood occurrence with reporter Allison Donahue, but a pattern of behavior intended to demean women at the workplace and abuse a position of power.

Last week, I read Allison Donahue's report on her interaction with Lucido and my heart sank. In watching interviews she gave afterward, she described how she felt in the exact same way I felt in November, 2018. She said his remarks made her feel "small." And immediately, I felt a wave of guilt and responsibility. I'd made calculations not to say anything at the time so as not to risk my potential ability to be effective in my new role. But in that decision, had I let this happen to Allison? In not reporting anything then, had I allowed this behavior to continue unchecked?

I want to be very clear of two things: 1) I am fine. And 2) Had this past week unfolded differently, I likely wouldn't be coming forward now.

Over the past week, I watched as Senator Lucido first confirmed his comments, then issued a Twitter apology that effectively blamed Donahue for being "offended" without taking ownership, then backtracking on his comments and saying he was misquoted, to finally telling reporters that, "It doesn't matter how she took it, it's how she wanted to take it," and accusing Donahue of having an ulterior agenda.

We have to stop excusing behavior that's done intentionally to belittle and minimize others so long as people are "effective." People with positions of power should be held responsible for treating others with respect. In coming forward today, I hope my report will help put an end to such behavior. To Allison Donahue, I'm sorry for not coming forward sooner. To my colleagues, we have been entrusted with a great deal of power and responsibility by those we represent - and it's on all of us to ensure everyone who works with us and around us feels welcome, respected, and safe.