

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 27, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Senator Schumer:

We write to express our deep disappointment that the Senate has failed to enact meaningful reforms to the *Congressional Accountability Act of 1995*. We urge you to bring before the full Senate legislation that would update and strengthen the procedures available to survivors of sexual harassment and discrimination in congressional workplaces.

Everyone deserves to work in an environment free from harassment and discrimination. In November, with your leadership, the Senate took an important first step in the effort to end harassment and discrimination in congressional workplaces with the passage of S. Res. 330, which requires anti-harassment and discrimination training for all Senators and staff at least once each Congress. While this training requirement was a significant step to address workplace harassment, there was broad, bipartisan agreement at that time that more had to be done to support survivors.

Although the *Congressional Accountability Act* (CAA) implemented meaningful reforms when it became law in 1995, it continues to require survivors to endure an antiquated dispute resolution process, including a month-long counseling session, forced mediation and a 30-day “cooling off” period before a victim can make a decision whether to pursue justice in a courtroom or continue with administrative procedures. The time has come to rewrite the CAA to provide a more equitable process that supports survivors of harassment and discrimination.

The Senate’s inaction stands in stark contrast to the bipartisan effort in the House of Representatives that led to the passage of bipartisan CAA reform legislation in February. The House bill includes a number of important provisions, such as eliminating waiting periods before a victim can take their case to court, increased transparency for awards and settlements, and a requirement that Members of the Senate and House pay for an award or settlement stemming from a case of sexual harassment or discrimination that they personally commit.

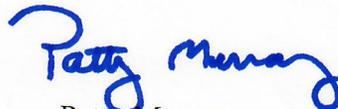
When the Senate considers CAA reform legislation, we will also have the ability to address an inequity that now exists between House and Senate staff. The House of Representatives passed H. Res. 724 that provides House staff who are survivors of harassment or discrimination access to

free legal representation. Senate staff who face similar harassment or discrimination must pay personally for legal representation or represent themselves through complicated legal proceedings. Therefore, the Senate must act quickly to provide Senate staff with the same resources as their House colleagues.

Inaction is unacceptable when a survey shows that four out of 10 women congressional staffers believe that sexual harassment is a problem on Capitol Hill and one out of six women in the same survey responded that they have been the survivors of sexual harassment. Survivors who have bravely come forward to share their stories have brought to light just how widespread harassment and discrimination continue to be throughout Capitol Hill. No longer can we allow the perpetrators of these crimes to hide behind a 23-year-old law. It's time to rewrite the *Congressional Accountability Act* and update the process through which survivors seek justice.

Sincerely,


Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator


Patty Murray
United States Senator


Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator


Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator


Claire McCaskill
United States Senator


Susan M. Collins
United States Senator


Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

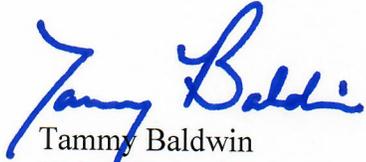

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



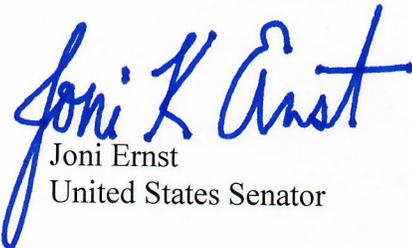
Deb Fischer
United States Senator



Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senator



Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator



Joni Ernst
United States Senator



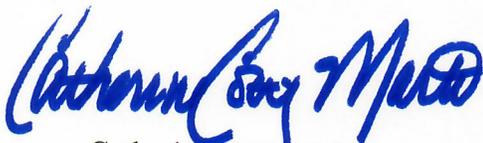
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator