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DFEH Creates Task Force to Study Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Group to study sexual harassment in CA workplaces, including training requirements and best practices

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) announced today the formation of a Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace to study the problem of sexual harassment, the effects of 10 years of harassment prevention training in the state, and best practices to prevent harassment.

The group will build upon the work of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Select Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workplace, with a specific focus on sexual harassment in California. The EEOC group, established in January 2015, has held public hearings and collected testimony on the nature of different forms of workplace harassment and promising practices to prevent harassment.

“California has mandated sexual harassment training for supervisory employees in workplaces with more than 50 employees since the passage of AB 1825 in 2004, and that history and experience is a rich source of untapped information” noted DFEH Director Kevin Kish, who convened the task force. “We want to find out what has worked, what hasn’t, what best practices can be identified, and where we go from here in our efforts to eliminate workplace sexual harassment in California.”

In addition to Director Kish, the members of the California Task Force are:

- Dawn Andrews, Senior Counsel – Labor and Employment, Sempra Energy
- Michele Landis Dauber, Frederick I. Richman Professor of Law, Stanford Law School
- Chaya Mandelbaum, Partner, Shareholder at Rudy Exelrod Zieff & Lowe and Chair of the Fair Employment and Housing Council
- Amy Oppenheimer, Law Offices of Amy Oppenheimer, Chair of the Labor and Employment Section of the State Bar of California and founder of the Association of Workplace Investigators
- Patti Perez, Shareholder at Ogletree Deakins and member of the Fair Employment and Housing Council
- Jennifer Reisch, Legal Director, Equal Rights Advocates

“We continue to see thousands of complaints of workplace sexual harassment filed every year in California,” said Perez. “Our ultimate goal is to provide the public with resources for preventing sexual harassment and for addressing the issues comprehensively and effectively when they arise.”

The DFEH is the state agency charged with enforcing California’s civil rights laws. The mission of the DFEH is to protect the people of California from unlawful discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations and from hate violence. For more information, visit the Department’s Web site at www.dfeh.ca.gov.