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Attorney General DeWine  
30 E. Broad Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

August 1, 2018

Dear Attorney General DeWine,

Thank you for your response to our June letters in which we requested information with regard to how your office runs sexual harassment investigations. Unfortunately, we remain dissatisfied with your response. It dodged the substance of our concerns and provided no information as to your office's practices in advising and supervising outside counsel you engage to represent the people of Ohio.

And now, a new conflict of interest has come to light that casts even more doubt on the final report on Rep. Bill Seitz's harmful comments in January. The same attorney you appointed to investigate Rep. Seitz's public belittling of sexual harassment of a legislative staffer by former Senator Cliff Hite also represented the woman that Hite harassed, perhaps at the same time.

This bears repeating: You engaged the same attorney who represented Hite's victim to investigate jokes about Hite's harassment of that victim. The outside counsel produced a report that misstated and misapplied the legal standards and policies at issue and featured interviews with only two individuals, excluding other lawmakers who had stated they were offended by Rep. Seitz's behavior, and excluding Hite's victim. One would think she would have been sought out and asked how she felt about powerful lawmakers at an after-work party laughing on stage and in the audience about how she'd been mistreated by another (formerly) powerful lawmaker. But even without an interview, one can easily place one's self in her shoes and imagine the humiliation and disappointment.

The conflict of interests here is glaring. On top of the well-known fact of Seitz's 36 years working at the Taft firm and the publicly available records of the Taft firm's many campaign contributions to Seitz, including while they were investigating him, this latest conflict to surface shows that the investigation that exonerated Seitz is even more tainted than we first believed.

The low quality of the report itself should have raised a red flag that something was suspicious about this engagement. The report did not even cite the policies on which attorneys from your office had just trained the entire legislature, from interns to LSC staff to elected lawmakers. There has been an enormous failure on the part of your office to select competent, unbiased, independent counsel to represent the people of Ohio and a failure to direct and supervise their work appropriately.

As you stated, your office has the unilateral power to award millions of dollars in taxpayer-funded work to over 150 private law firms. We ask that when you award these lucrative contracts to firms seeking to

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represent the people of this state that you perform greater due diligence to uncover conflicts of interest – both the obvious, publicly known variety and the more vague ones.

We again strongly urge you to order a “re-do” of this investigation into Rep. Seitz’s conduct, as three of the state’s biggest newspapers have called for, with a truly impartial and unbiased firm that will undertake its duty to represent the people of Ohio with more seriousness and professional care. We also hope you will examine your office’s practices in evaluating and assigning outside counsel to the agencies of this state so that Ohio’s citizens can be assured their tax dollars are paying for quality work, not cover-ups.

When men in powerful positions face no consequences for their harmful and dismissive conduct toward women, a hostile workplace will continue to exist. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter as justice has already waited too long.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Teresa Fedor".

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State Representative  
House District 45

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