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Contact: Allison Ruff  
(916) 319-2043

### **Assemblymember Laura Friedman Announces First Hearing on Changing the Capitol Culture and Stopping Sexual Harassment and Abuse**

SACRAMENTO - Assemblymember Laura Friedman (D-Glendale) Chair of the Assembly Rules Subcommittee on Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation Prevention and Response has announced the first of the subcommittee's hearings, which will be held on Tuesday, November 28<sup>th</sup> in the State Capitol.

"Through these hearings we will be outlining our current policies, and asking for people who work in the Capitol and in the greater Capitol community to help us determine what actions we can take to change the culture, improve our policies, and ensure that those who have been harassed and abused feel safe when reporting with real protections in place throughout the process," Assemblymember Friedman said. "Everything is on the table, but let me be clear – while individuals are welcome to publicly share their experiences, we understand the vulnerability that many feel and we are not asking any victim of harassment or abuse to testify. We are asking that they share their ideas for change—we want to know where our system breaks down, and how we can improve it to protect everyone who works in and around the Capitol. Every idea will be welcome, whether submitted anonymously or offered in public."

Assemblymember Friedman, one of the women who signed the October 17<sup>th</sup> letter that ignited the discussion around sexual harassment and abuse, also stated that among the issues the subcommittee will consider are what best practices are in place elsewhere, in both the public and private sectors, a complete overhaul of training programs to reflect the unique nature of legislative work for members, staff, and lobbyists, and how can we increase protections for those who come forward— including adding sexual harassment to the Legislative Employee Whistleblower Protection Act passed by the Assembly.

"Several individuals and groups have already shared their recommendations for change. In the coming weeks, we'll be setting up an independent portal for individuals to report their experiences or suggestions anonymously," said Friedman. "Until then, my door is always open to anyone who would like to privately share their stories, their concerns, or their recommendations."

"I am committed to a comprehensive evaluation of our processes on sexual harassment, as well as, prevention guidelines to end this intolerable and completely unacceptable behavior. Position and power should never be used as a weapon and I will stand with the victims and those

who cannot speak for themselves," said Marie Waldron (R-Escondido), Vice Chair of the Assembly Rules Subcommittee on Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation Prevention.

Speaker Anthony Rendon (D-Lakewood) established the Assembly Rules Subcommittee on Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation Prevention and Response in June.

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*Laura Friedman represents the 43rd Assembly District which encompasses the cities of Burbank, Glendale, and La Cañada Flintridge, as well as the communities of La Crescenta and Montrose, and the Los Angeles neighborhoods of Atwater Village, Beachwood Canyon, Los Feliz, East Hollywood, Franklin Hills, and Silver Lake.*