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California State Assembly
Rules Committee
California State Capitol
Room 3016
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Assembly Member Cooley and Assembly Member Cunningham:

I represent four former State employees who wish to remain anonymous out of fear of reprisal for speaking out against a powerful woman, Assembly Member Cristina Garcia. Each of my clients used to work for Assemblywoman Garcia, and have decided to speak out against the abuse they faced while under her supervision. Specifically, my clients have asked me to forward a letter they wrote to you explaining their experiences. Please contact me if and when you decide to investigate these serious allegations.

This is their letter:

We are former employees of Assembly Member Cristina Garcia. We worked in Ms. Garcia's office over various times since she was elected to office in 2012. We have been following the recent events around allegations of misconduct by Ms. Garcia. We believe that we have additional information as you begin to investigate these disturbing allegations and Ms. Garcia's conduct generally. We hope that our insights will contribute to making the Assembly a better place for people to work.

In sending this letter, we also want to make it clear that although we are raising our concerns with Ms. Garcia's conduct in this letter, we believe that the Assembly bears responsibility as well. As an institution, the Assembly makes it clear to the staff that its role is to protect the members. Even with the credible allegations leveled against Ms. Garcia by then staffer Daniel Fierro, the response has been a disappointing double standard and a "circling of the wagons." As employees of Ms. Garcia and the California State Assembly, we never felt as though we had a path to our own protection with Assembly human resources or otherwise. Being an Assembly staffer is by its very nature a disempowered position. We work for members who are very powerful and we are given

virtually no voice and have no bargaining power over the terms or culture of our employment. We all hope that this letter is a step forward in changing that dynamic.

We were witness to the following while employees of Ms. Garcia and the California State Assembly:

- Alcohol was often in Ms. Garcia's Assembly office and she drank alcohol when in her office while doing official Assembly business.
- This alcohol that was either purchased by herself, or her senior staff was made available to Assembly staff. Oftentimes Ms. Garcia pressured staff to join her in drinking alcoholic beverages both at the office and at local bars, including events she was hosting.
- We are unsure if this alcohol was in fact purchased with Assembly, personal or campaign funds.
- Ms. Garcia often spoke, if not bragged, about her sexual activity. She would describe various sex acts in uncomfortable detail. She commonly had these conversations in front of staff members. She seemed to like to make her staff uncomfortable with this type of content. In fact, this content did make us uncomfortable.
- Ms. Garcia also spoke of her sexual activities with other elected officials including other members of the Assembly who we will not name in respect for their privacy. She spoke graphically about their sexual activity and stated as fact that they were sexually active in Assembly offices.
- Ms. Garcia said that having sex with other elected officials was a good way of getting information; she claimed that she received a lot of information during post-coital (or, in her words, "after they come") conversations.
- Ms. Garcia commonly and pervasively used vulgar language with, to, at and around staff. For example, she frequently used the "C word" while referring to other women.

- Ms. Garcia told the staff all the time that we were "replaceable". She liked to constantly remind the staff that we were all "at will employees." She often said to us "The State of California might sign your check, but I am the boss." We constantly felt like we could be fired at anytime, for any reason without recourse or due process from the Assembly.
- Ms. Garcia would often turn on members of the staff. Singling them out for seemingly no reason. She would belittle them in front of others and invent reasons to criticize their job performance.
- Staff was often asked to run personal errands for Ms. Garcia including taking care of her dogs among other things. We were often asked to drive Ms. Garcia around even when Ms. Garcia was on personal business including when she was returning from the airport from personal vacations.
- Sometimes we were asked to perform campaign activities in the Assembly office including fundraising and donation request calls. In addition, there were Assembly staff members that were also campaign staff and they would be on Assembly time but performing campaign activities. There were not strict lines between Assembly resources and campaign resources.
- Ms. Garcia and her senior staff also pressured us, to assist other local and statewide candidates and we were reprimanded if we did not take part. Additionally, some members of the staff were directed to help plan Mayor Crespo's memorial activities along with other assignments that had no legislative purpose.
- Beyond belittling members of the staff, Ms. Garcia spent a lot of time inappropriately disparaging other elected officials, including Speaker Rendon, Speaker Emeritus Perez, Senator Mendoza, Senator Lara, Assembly Member Bonnie Lowenthal, Assembly Member Lorena Gonzalez and Assembly Member Isadore Hall III as well as many local elected officials. Ms. Garcia did not encourage an environment of collegiality and she seemed intent on disparaging any other officials who drew positive attention. We are unsure if this environment of bullying might be pervasive in the Assembly, but it makes for a difficult environment to work in.

- Ms. Garcia showed herself to be very retaliatory in nature. We all bore witness to her vindictive nature. We witnessed firsthand her volatile response to any sort of conflict or criticism. We also have concerns about the Assembly's willingness to either protect or certainly advocate for former or current staff. This was our experience and in light of Mr. Fierro's experience, we have no reason to think that this had changed. It is for these reasons that we feel we need to remain anonymous.

In conclusion, all of us spent years working in the employment of Cristina Garcia and the California State Assembly. Ms. Garcia's Assembly office was a difficult place to work. It was a toxic environment.

We hope that this information assists you as you investigate the behavior of Ms. Garcia. We urge you to work to make the Assembly a better place for all people to work and end the culture that promotes the disempowerment of Assembly staff. If you have additional questions for us, please direct them to our attorney.

The above were my clients' own words. These are not mere allegations. My clients will vigorously defend what they have said, but I will insist that the Assembly take serious steps to ensure their protection against reprisal. Please take notice: should my clients ever face any retaliation for speaking out, you can be assured swift legal action will be taken against the State of California and any responsible persons.

Sincerely,

Gilleon Law Firm



Daniel M. Gilleon

cc: Speaker Anthony Rendon