



February 13, 2019

AIA New York Workplace Harassment Testimony

Thank you to Governor Cuomo, Speaker Heastie, and Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins for supporting these hearings today, and to Senators Biaggi, Skoufis, and Salazar, and Assembly Members Crespo, Walker, and Titus for chairing them.

Workplace harassment has long been a significant problem in the construction industry, including in architecture. AIA New York, the professional organization representing nearly 6,000 architects working and living in Manhattan, has worked hard to limit workplace harassment in the profession.

Last year, following multiple accusations of workplace harassment in our industry, we publicly retracted prestigious design awards from notable architects. We also supported an effort to amend our national organization's code of ethics to more explicitly address sexual harassment. This helped instigate a conversation in New York's architecture community about the need for better and safer working conditions. Condemning harassers can be a powerful tool, but it alone is not enough to curb workplace harassment.

Further action by our state government is needed not only to punish harassers, but also to protect victims. As a professional association, there is limited action we can take to legally protect our members from workplace harassment. It is the duty of New York State's government to protect its residents. New York State's laws around protecting victims are flawed and need to be improved. We support efforts that make it easier for a victim to take legal action against an employer committing or enabling harassment.

AIA New York will continue to do its part to fight workplace harassment however we can. Nevertheless, our members need help from Albany to fully protect them. We again thank all the elected officials supporting these hearings and hope that impactful legislative solutions will result from them.

Sincerely,

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