

NEWS...



From the office of State Representative Kelly Cassidy

**For Immediate Release:
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Cassidy Statement on Retaliation by Speaker Madigan's Operation

"In February, I first spoke publicly about the inadequate response to allegations of sexual harassment within Speaker Madigan's operation. On two occasions since that time, someone loyal to Speaker Madigan has attempted to intimidate me and my part-time employer. After the second occurrence, I knew it wouldn't stop, and I knew that the only way to ensure that these retaliation efforts cease is to place a spotlight on them.

Having spent my entire adult life advocating for those without power, I have advocated for stronger responses to discrimination at all levels as well as in the private sector. I know that my role in the House affords me a greater degree of safety than many who have long complained about the ways women are treated in Springfield. Since coming forward yesterday, I have been stopped by more women (and men) than I can count, thanking me for speaking up because they don't feel safe speaking out about their own experiences of intimidation, retaliation, and harassment.

As this story now turns to the inevitable he said/she said and denials, I remain firmly committed to being a steadfast voice for justice and equality, just as I have worked against harassment and discrimination throughout my career. I stand by my story. I did not want to leave the work and the team I loved being a part of, and I certainly did not want to spend the waning days of this session focused on anything other than passing my bills and getting a budget completed.

I am encouraged to see the call for an investigation by the Legislative Inspector General from both the Illinois State Senate Women's Caucus and Speaker Madigan. Based on the widely reported concerns about the ability of the LIG to operate with true independence, I stand by my original call for a truly independent and outside investigation into this culture that appears to pervade the organizations led by Speaker Madigan.

I am committed to speaking out against retaliation and intimidation, and to doing what I can to change this abusive culture. We can and must do better for all of us."

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