

### ***Message from Gov. Jay Inslee***

Dear fellow state employees,

If you've been reading or watching the news these past few weeks, you've seen numerous stories about issues related to sexual harassment as well as cases ranging from assault to inappropriate and hostile behavior in the workplace. Individuals are stepping forward to share disturbing stories of assault committed by people in positions of power, as well as more covert behaviors and comments between colleagues that are disrespectful, offensive and unacceptable. These stories are showing us how pervasive this kind of behavior can be and how challenging it is for victims to speak out.

While we'd like to think these issues aren't happening to us or our colleagues, they are. Some of the stories are about situations that have occurred in our own state legislature and state agencies. These issues pervade every corner of society. The headlines focus on politics, Hollywood and professional sports. But we know that this behavior can infect any work place.

It is understandably difficult for victims to speak out because these crimes and violations of policy are nearly always about a great difference in power between the harasser/abuser and the victims.

I pride myself on being governor of a state that is among the most inclusive and diverse in the nation. We respect and embrace people of all abilities, orientations, genders, religions and colors. And we've taken steps to make sure our state government reflects those values with initiatives to support all people. We have taken great strides in creating programs for state employees to ensure we continue to build an inclusive workforce. I remain committed to ensuring we have a respectful and inclusive work environment for everyone.

We are taking a serious look at everything including new employee orientation, the types and frequency of training we provide employees and supervisors to the options employees have to seek advice, support or help. Some employees may not feel they have a safe, confidential and trusted source to go to for help. That's one of the things we can improve and I will report back to you as we make changes.

In the meantime, I've asked your director or secretary for their commitment in building a work environment that is inclusive to every employee. I have asked each of them to share information about how to contact your human resources department and remind you that if you are a represented employee you can also contact your union representative. In instances where you feel you might need help from an external organization, the state's Human Rights Commission might be able to help.

I'm so proud of the work you do every day. You keep our roads safe. You help people access crucial health and human services. You keep toxics out of our water. You help families make memories at our parks and beaches and lakes. You fight fires, help businesses grow and find ways to help students pay for college. Every one of you deserves to work in an inclusive environment and be treated with respect and dignity. Every one of you deserves to be heard when that's not happening.

Very truly yours,  
Jay Inslee