



Brad Owen
Lieutenant Governor



January 22, 2016

Senator Pam Roach
INB 112

Re: Indecorous and Inappropriate Conduct

Dear Senator Roach:

Less than one year ago, I wrote to you regarding your poor public behavior and your abusive treatment of staff, members, and the public. I cited no fewer than seven prior instances in which you were sanctioned by your peers for such behavior. At that time, I directed that you have no further unmonitored contact with your committee staff.

I also stated this: “Your abusive behavior must stop. Further violations will not be tolerated. We will continue to review and investigate your actions as we view necessary.”

Last summer, at the request of Republican leadership I appointed you to the Human Trafficking Task Force reauthorized in ESSB 5884. The task force represents a significant step toward addressing the myriad of problems that arise from the brutal, complex organizations that engage in the trafficking of persons. This is vitally important work, as recognized not only by the legislature but also the many thousands of people who are impacted by what is essentially modern day slavery.

The task force first met on December 14. Since that date, I have received numerous complaints about your conduct. You attacked agency staff, persons both present and absent, stakeholders, and persons who have miraculously survived being victims of trafficking. Commerce officials described their staff as “visibly shaken” by your attacks. Although I obviously am disturbed by your treatment of the representatives of state agencies and valuable interest groups, I am horrified that your abuse extended to the survivors of trafficking.

I regret that this letter is written more than a month after the task force met. However, because the meeting was not videotaped or recorded, time was needed to allow the many disappointed participants the opportunity to provide their views after suffering through your tirade. I received reports from many quarters and they were remarkably consistent.

Among other fictions, you claimed that sexually trafficked and homeless youth are deliberately trying not to fit in with their families by tattooing their faces and getting piercings. Without any apparent basis you minimized the exploitation of sexually trafficked minors by alleging that they probably spend their money on drugs, and asked if the labor trafficked persons were ‘illegals.’ These comments serve one and only one purpose: to diminish the horrors of trafficking by attacking its victims and consequently erode support for the courageous efforts to combat it.

President of the Senate Chairman, Rules Committee	220 Legislative Building 416 Sid Snyder Ave SW PO Box 40400 Olympia, WA 98504-0400	Phone: (360) 786-7700 FAX: (360) 786-7749 e-mail: Owen.Brad@leg.wa.gov
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Take just a few minutes and consider how your statements were received. These reactions should shock anyone with a functioning moral compass:

- She was completely uninformed on the issue of human trafficking and the efforts in this state to address this issue from a victim-centered, trauma-informed, and inclusive perspective.
- We would not encourage people who have been victimized by the same stigma that Sen. Roach voiced yesterday to participate in a task force where they would again be blamed for being victims of a crime.
- Many of the senator's comments were victim-blaming, bigoted, and potentially triggering to survivors and others at the table.
- Continuing to allow Senator Roach to participate in this group will be detrimental, if not fatal, to the process of improving statewide response to human trafficking.
- Senator Roach's participation was counter-productive, disruptive, offensive, and completely counter to a victim-centered, inclusive approach to addressing the issue of human trafficking.
- I am worried that she made people feel that this was a waste of their time because little could be accomplished while she was engaging in political posturing.
- Senator Roach's accusatory, dismissive, and judgmental comments yesterday did not leave a safe space for survivors to participate and attend that session.
- Survivors in that room were made to feel that they would be vilified and mocked if they were to attend.

I have attached the complete list of statements that were provided by the Department of Commerce. I strongly recommend that you read them all and consider the damage you have inflicted upon people who did nothing to merit such treatment. Victims of trafficking are already traumatized, and none of them need the additional trauma of continued exposure to you or your vile comments.

The Department of Commerce is considering restructuring task force meetings solely due to the extreme nature of your comments, and in order to limit direct contact between you and trafficking victims, and their advocates. This unfortunate result would be a disservice to all victims of trafficking in Washington, but is an entirely rational reaction to your behavior. I do not believe that Commerce should take such action while I remain in a position to help.

I do not have the legal authority to remove you from the Senate. I believe that you *should* be removed based on your history of egregious and offensive behavior, conduct unbecoming any elected official, a consistent disregard for the rules of the Senate, and multiple public displays of contempt for your colleagues, Senate staff, your personal staff, and members of the public who suffer the misfortune of expressing disagreement with you on issues of public policy. If your recollection needs to be refreshed, you might review my letter of February 13, 2015, and the numerous sanctions imposed against you – most often by your Republican colleagues – in 1999, 2003, 2008, 2009, 2010, and recommended in 2012.

I have been fortunate to serve as Lieutenant Governor and President of the Senate for over 19 years. Over those years I have made hundreds of appointments of senators to task forces and

work groups, in consultation with legislative leaders, elected officials and interested members of the public. This vital process provides for the development of public policy outside of a legislative session, and allows the public to directly participate in the democratic process. I will not tolerate actions that undermine such an important part of our system of self-government.

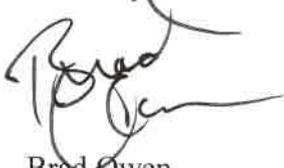
For over 100 years, the courts of this state have recognized the following principle: “the power of appointment implies the power of removal.” This long established principle provides a check upon inappropriate behavior by persons chosen to participate in official actions. Before today, I have never removed an appointee, and do not recall ever considering taking such drastic action.

As the person charged with appointment authority under ESSB 5884, I have the authority to remove you as well. Accordingly, I hereby remove you from the Washington State Task Force Against the Trafficking of Persons, effective immediately. I will appoint a replacement upon further consultation with Republican leadership.

I further direct you to engage in no retaliatory actions against any persons associated with or having any connection whatsoever to the human trafficking task force, and to refrain from attending any further meetings.

Last year I emphasized that “Sixteen years of inappropriate and unprofessional conduct is enough.” A year has passed. Your conduct has not improved. I am not optimistic that it will.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Owen", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Brad Owen
Lieutenant Governor

Cc: Senator Mark Schoesler
Senator Sharon Nelson
Hunter Goodman, Secretary of the Senate
Director Brian Bonlender, Washington State Department of Commerce
Members of the Washington State Task Force Against the Trafficking of Persons



SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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TO: Lt. Governor Brad Owen

FROM: Dan Newell, Assistant Superintendent
Secondary Education & Student Support

DATE: January 14, 2016

RE: Task Force Against the Trafficking of Persons

December 14, 2015, I was fortunate to be invited to participate in the first task force committee meeting which is dealing with the extremely challenging issue of human trafficking. Senator Pam Roach attended as a committee member and after sitting through the first meeting with her, I feel compelled to express my disappointment as I listened to her thoughtless remarks.

Senator Roach made several comments which were unprofessional, embarrassing, disrespectful, and incredibly insensitive. She made several cruel comments but one sticks out as being incredibly rude. She made references to the idea that our young girls wouldn't be exploited if they didn't have tattoos and wear nose rings. You will discover if you ask the other committee members, Senator Roach made many abrasive comments such as this one.

I am not willing to continue to represent my agency on this committee until Senator Roach is removed from the group. We need someone with compassion who understands and cares about all people where human trafficking for any purpose, especially the sexual exploitation and subservient manipulation of agricultural workers in eastern Washington.

Summary of Feedback Received in Regards to Senator Roach's Participation at December 14 Meeting:

- We were all exasperated yesterday, but the impact is more than frustration or exasperation. It could result in a much less effective task force which would be harmful to the good work that is intended and that we all strive toward.
- Many of the senator's comments were victim-blaming, bigoted, and potentially triggering to survivors and others at the table.
- Continuing to allow Senator Roach to participate in this group will be detrimental, if not fatal, to the process of improving statewide response to human trafficking.
- Senator Roach's participation was counter-productive, disruptive, offensive, and completely counter to a victim-centered, inclusive approach to addressing the issue of human trafficking.
- She was completely uninformed on the issue of human trafficking and the efforts in this state to address this issue from a victim-centered, trauma-informed, and inclusive perspective.
- She took away at least 30 minutes of the meeting that could have been spent making progress toward the goals of the task force.
- I am worried that she made people feel that this was a waste of their time because little could be accomplished while she was engaging in political posturing. It interfered with the progress of this group, and bullied OCVA and Commerce.
- She alienated many participants, and you risk losing participation from people with essential experience.
- I regularly lend my voice to the victims and survivors of trafficking who cannot speak for themselves. Senator Roach's accusatory, dismissive, and judgmental comments yesterday did not leave a safe space for survivors to participate and attend that session.
- Many of my colleagues were offended. Survivors in that room were made to feel that they would be vilified and mocked if they were to attend.
- We would not encourage people who have been victimized by the same stigma that Sen. Roach voiced yesterday to participate in a task force where they would again be blamed for being victims of a crime.
- One legislative staff member commented that the behavior was the "worst I've seen" from her over the years.
- Thank you for managing a tough process that some seemed inclined to disrupt.
- Commerce handled it very professionally.
- Commerce staff showed professionalism and composure in facilitating the meeting.

Commerce staff comments:

Alice:

- It was very uncomfortable to be the object of unexpected criticism that put us on the defensive. It derailed the discussion we were trying to have.
- It was frustrating to have put so much time and planning into the meeting, and to know that we had limited time with participants who had traveled from around the state, and then have discussions diverted. We could not fully discuss members' thoughts about priorities due to this. I worried that there were members who were not able to share their thoughts because there was no time to do so.

Stephanie:

- The comments made by Senator Roach were highly inappropriate, disrespectful and "victim blaming." While individuals have the right to voice their opinions, Senator Roach's behavior

demonstrated complete disrespect for individuals who are underserved and marginalized (a high percentage of whom are targets of violence including human trafficking) and lack of respect for individuals attending the Task Force meeting.

- Senator Roach's negative and judgmental comments regarding youth who have tattoos and piercings demonstrated her marginalization of youth. She went on to share, "I don't blame parents..." regarding kicking kids out of their homes, again marginalizing youth and "victim blaming."
- Later in the meeting Senator Roach talked about a trip she made to Honduras or Belize. She made a comment about Mexican parents being able to afford one commodity, I believe she said a car, but not being able to take care of their kids. This comment seemed to be racist.
- The comments made by Senator Roach made me feel disappointed, sad and frustrated. I was particularly worried about the community member who attended the meeting and the impact of her behavior on him. Seeing as the meeting was focused on Human Trafficking and how to support victims/survivors, increase awareness and continue anti-trafficking efforts, I didn't expect such inappropriate behavior.
- In my 25 plus years of experience in victim services I have never experienced such inappropriate and highly concerning behavior. The senator's comments impacted me emotionally and physically for three days.
- After the inappropriate comments, there was no discussion. Committee members were quiet. I am not sure if that is because participants were shocked or were intimidated by Senator's Roach's "power."
- Senator Roach is in a position of power and misused that power in the task force meeting. Her behavior completely interrupted the meeting and negatively impacted many participants. Her behavior did not support the intent of the task force or an understanding of issues of oppression and how those issues critically impact victims/survivors.

Rick:

- Senator Roach dominated the second half of the meeting. She did not let us accomplish what we needed to do.
- She was disrespectful to staff and members of the committee.
- Senator Roach was highly critical of staff. Her criticism was baseless and it was not the appropriate time or place for that criticism.