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# AG: Independent investigators find Gov. Cuomo sexually harassed multiple women, violated state & federal laws

## Report by independent investigators find governor sexually harassed multiple women from 2013-20

Report: Sexual harassment included unwanted and inappropriate groping, kissing, hugging and comments that accusers called 'deeply humiliating, uncomfortable, offensive, or inappropriate'; executive chamber 'rife with fear and intimidation,' enabled 'harassment to occur and created a hostile work environment'

Cuomo denies wrongdoing, says attacks politically motivated

The following information was submitted by the Office of New York Attorney General Letitia James:

The independent investigators appointed by New York Attorney General Letitia James – led by Joon H. Kim and Anne L. Clark – on Tuesday released their report into the multiple allegations of sexual harassment by New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo. After nearly five months, the investigators concluded that Gov. Cuomo did sexually harass multiple women – including former and current state employees – by engaging in unwanted groping, kissing and hugging, and making inappropriate comments. Further, the governor and his senior staff took actions to retaliate against at least one former employee for coming forward with her story. Finally, the executive chamber fostered a "toxic" workplace that enabled "harassment to occur and created a hostile work environment." The investigators find that Gov. Cuomo's actions and those of the executive chamber violated multiple state and federal laws, as well as the executive chamber's own written policies.

The investigation was conducted after, on March 1, 2021, the executive chamber made a referral, pursuant to New York Executive Law Section 63(8), for Attorney General James to select independent lawyers to investigate "allegations of and circumstances surrounding sexual harassment claims made against the governor." Kim and Clark were chosen to lead the investigation on March 8, 2021.

"This is a sad day for New York because independent investigators have concluded that Gov. Cuomo sexually harassed multiple women and, in doing so, broke the law," James said. "I am grateful to all the women who came forward to tell their stories in painstaking detail, enabling investigators to get to the truth. No man – no matter how powerful – can be allowed to harass women or violate our human rights

laws, period."

Starting in December 2020, multiple women came forward with allegations that Gov. Cuomo sexually harassed them. Over the course of the investigation, the investigators interviewed 179 individuals. Those interviewed included complainants, current and former members of the executive chamber, State Troopers, additional state employees, and others who interacted regularly with the governor. More than 74,000 documents, emails, texts and pictures were also reviewed as evidence during the investigation.

Backed up by corroborating evidence and credible witnesses, the investigators detail multiple current or former New York state employees or women outside state service who were the targets of harassing conduct on the part of the governor.

As part of the investigation, Cuomo also sat with the interviewees and answered questions under oath. While the governor denied the most serious allegations, the investigators found he did so by offering "blanket denials" or that he had a "lack of recollection as to specific incidents." The investigators also found the governor's recollection "stood in stark contrast to the strength, specificity, and corroboration of the complainants' recollections, as well as the reports of many other individuals who offered observations and experiences of the governor's conduct."

Additionally, the investigators found the executive chamber was "rife with fear and intimidation" that not only "enabled the above-described instances of harassment to occur," but also "created a hostile work environment overall." Further, Cuomo, himself, and the executive chamber engaged in "retaliatory" behavior by "intend[ing] to discredit and disparage" a former employee that came forward with her story of harassment.

The investigation found Cuomo's sexual harassment of multiple women and his and the executive chamber's retaliation against a former employee for coming forward with her claims of sexual harassment violated multiple state and federal laws, including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the New York State Human Rights Law, and 42 U.S. Code § 1983, in addition to the executive chamber's own equal employment policies.

Jennifer Kennedy Park, Abena

Mainoo and Rahul Mukhi from the law firm Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP were all deputized – in addition to Joon H. Kim – as special deputies to the first deputy attorney general to conduct the investigation and issue this report. Yannick Grant from the law firm Vladeck, Raskin & Clark, P.C. was deputized – in addition to Anne L. Clark – as a special deputy to the first deputy attorney general to conduct the investigation and issue this report. A number of other attorneys from both Cleary Gottlieb and Vladeck were appointed as special assistants to the first deputy attorney general to assist with the investigation.

Three appendices are included on the AG's website, as well as in the online version of this story at www.wnypapers.com.

### Cuomo's Response

In a taped video message posted Tuesday afternoon on his website, Cuomo emphatically denied any wrongdoing. He showed several images of kissing and hugging people over the years, noting it was his means of greeting.

See Page 5 for the full rebuttal.

Cuomo's attorney, Rita Glavin of Glavin PLLC, released a detailed response to the independent reviewer report on allegations against the governor. The position statement can be viewed at [https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2021-08/8.3.21\\_Position\\_Statement\\_of\\_Governor\\_Cuomo.pdf](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2021-08/8.3.21_Position_Statement_of_Governor_Cuomo.pdf).

### Additional Responses

Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie said, "We have received the attorney general's 168-page report containing findings of sexual harassment and misconduct committed by Gov. Cuomo. The findings contained in the report are disturbing. The details provided by the victims are gut-wrenching. Our hearts go out to all the individuals who have had to endure this horrible experience. The conduct by the governor outlined in this report would indicate someone who is not fit for office."

"The report has been forwarded to the members of the judiciary committee as well as all members of the Assembly. We will now undertake an in-depth examination of the report and its corresponding exhibits with our Assembly counsels as well the legal firm we have retained to assist us.

"We will have more to say in the very near future."

Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul said, "Sexual harassment is unacceptable in any workplace, and certainly not in public service. The attorney general's investigation has documented repulsive and unlawful behavior by the governor towards multiple women. I believe these brave women and admire their courage coming forward."

"No one is above the law. Under the New York Constitution, the Assembly will now determine the next steps."

"Because lieutenant governors stand next in the line of succession, it would not be appropriate to comment further on the process at this moment."

New York State Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt said, "Today is a sad and sobering day for all New Yorkers. The attorney general's findings confirm and reinforce the allegations brought by the brave women who came forward against a powerful figure – that Andrew Cuomo is a serial harasser, unfit to hold public office. In the wake of another devastating report, now more than ever Andrew Cuomo must resign. If he fails to do so, the Legislature must immediately reconvene to take action to remove him."

"New Yorkers have already been subjected to far too many lies, scandals and misdeeds perpetrated by this governor and his associates. It is time to bring this sad, tawdry and corrupt chapter in New York's history to a close, and to restore decency, honesty and accountability to our state's highest office. New York is facing profound challenges, ranging from a wave of violence in our streets, to a badly battered economy. To effectively address these challenges, we need a change in leadership as quickly as possible."

"I must also commend the attorney general and her team for refusing to be intimidated by this governor. From the very beginning, Andrew Cuomo and his associates attempted to bully, undercut, and undermine the attorney general – all as part of an effort to prevent her from doing her job. From attempting to block the initial referral to the attorney general's office, to the intimidation of potential witnesses, to the blatant attempts to smear her integrity and motivations, this governor left no stone unturned in his efforts to prevent the truth from being discovered."

SEE HEASTIE, continued on Page 7

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