



## Kriss Worthington

Councilmember, City of Berkeley, District 7  
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CONSENT CALENDAR  
 February 27, 2018

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
 From: Councilmember Kriss Worthington

Subject: Support Assembly Bill 403: Legislative Employee Whistleblower Protection Act

### RECOMMENDATION:

That the Council support Assembly Bill 403 which ensures whistleblower protections for all legislative employees and send a letter to Governor Jerry Brown urging him to sign the bill into law.

### BACKGROUND:

In light of numerous sexual harassment allegations made against powerful individuals in all corners of our society, it is our utmost responsibility to protect those who courageously speak out. Therefore, the city should support the state's efforts to ensure whistleblower protections for legislative employees. In the long term, we hope the state will extend similar protections to brave people in both the public and private spheres.

Assembly Bill 403 imposes civil and criminal liability on legislators or employees who interfere with or retaliate against an individual's right to make a protected disclosure or good faith allegation. Hence, the bill would strengthen legal repercussions for those trying to violate a person's ability to be a whistleblower. This bill would not only make sexual harassment allegations more transparent, but also other violations of law and legislative standard of conduct.

Here is a link to Assembly Bill 403:

[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201720180AB403](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB403)

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Minimal.

### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:

Consistent with Berkeley's Environmental Sustainability Goals and no negative impact.

### CONTACT PERSON:

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Attachment:

1. Letter to Governor Jerry Brown

Dear Governor Jerry Brown,

The Berkeley City Council respectfully requests that you sign Assembly Bill 403 into law, ensuring vital whistleblower protections for all legislative employees.

In light of numerous sexual harassment allegations made against powerful individuals in all corners of our society, it is the State's utmost responsibility to protect those who courageously speak out. Therefore, this important and long overdue bill is a crucial step.

Assembly Bill 403 imposes civil and criminal liability on legislators or employees who interfere with or retaliate against an individual's right to make a protected disclosure or good faith allegation. Hence, the bill would strengthen legal repercussions for those trying to violate a person's ability to be a whistleblower.

This bill would not only make sexual harassment allegations more transparent, but also other violations of law and legislative standard of conduct.

Legislators and legislative employees should be role models and exemplary citizens and consequently should be held accountable for any transgressions of acceptable moral or ethical conduct and the law. While this bill is an important step in the right direction, we hope that similar whistleblower protections will soon be extended further into the public and private realms. All Californians deserve the ability to stand up and speak out.

In sum, we implore you to sign Assembly Bill 403 into law. It is well past time for the State of California to support and protect the brave men and women who let their voice be heard against a tide of abuse, corruption, and harassment.

Respectfully,

The Berkeley City Council