

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

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December 4, 2019

The Honorable Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Wexton and Beyer,

Thank you for your letter dated November 21, 2019 regarding the work environment for LGBTQ employees at the National Science Foundation (NSF). The NSF workforce is invaluable for carrying out the agency's mission and their safety and wellbeing is of paramount importance to me. I am dismayed to learn about recent incidents of harassment, bullying, and retaliation against NSF employees who were targeted because of their sexual orientation. I am also concerned about the apparent deficiencies in the response from NSF senior management.

I take the issue of harassment very seriously and I could not agree more that we must take all necessary steps to ensure the dedicated employees at NSF are able to work in an environment free from harassment and bullying. I would like to take this opportunity to tell the individuals targeted in these recent incidents, and all NSF employees, that you are valued and deserve to feel safe and supported at work. Representatives Wexton and Beyer, thank you for your dedication to your constituents in bringing this matter to the Committee's attention, where we can work to ensure all federal science agencies are committed to a culture of inclusion and accountability.

I was proud to start this Congress with the introduction of the *Combating Sexual Harassment in Science Act of 2019*, an important step in rooting out harassment in Federally-funded research environments. That legislation evolved from over a year of oversight activity, and it is clear that we must redouble our efforts with a focus on improving the work environment within our nation's Federal science agencies. I look forward to working closely with these agencies to identify opportunities to move beyond a culture of silence to foster an environment that is safe and supportive for everyone.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of NSF employees.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Eddie Bernice Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Eddie" being the most prominent.

Eddie Bernice Johnson

Chairwoman

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology