

Message from Assistant Secretary Tara Sweeney - Continuing to Strengthen Our Workplace Culture

From: Tara Sweeney, Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs <as-ia@bia.gov> Sent: Friday, November 2, 2018 6:57 PM

To: All IE <all_ie@bie.edu>; all_bia@bia.gov <all_bia@bia.gov>

Subject: Continuing to Strengthen Our Workplace Culture

(NOTE TO SUPERVISORS: Please ensure that all employees without access to email receive a paper copy of this message.)

November 2, 2018

To: Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Employees Bureau of Indian Affairs Employees
Bureau of Indian Education Employees

From: Tara Sweeney, Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Subject:
Continuing to Strengthen Our Workplace Culture

As you have seen in messages from Secretary Zinke and Deputy Secretary Bernhardt over the past year and a half, there are several Department-wide efforts underway to address negative workplace behaviors, such as ethical violations, harassment, and other misconduct. These types of behaviors are absolutely unacceptable because they hurt morale and prevent us from providing the best service to the American people. Harassing conduct in particular can seriously impact employee health and destroy workplace trust and relationships.

I therefore want to share my commitment with you that if any such negative workplace behavior occurs in our office, it will be investigated and appropriately addressed. It is my top priority that everyone who works here feels safe and is not subjected to unwelcome harassing conduct. I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that the Department's Personnel Bulletin 18-01: Prevention and Elimination of Harassing Conduct was issued six months ago. Although I expect that you reviewed it when it was announced, I strongly encourage you to revisit it now to ensure that you understand not only the behavior expected of all employees, but also supervisors' and managers' obligations when any instance of harassing conduct is reported to them. You should also be familiar with the reporting expectations placed on you if you witness any harassing conduct, as well as the resources available to you, if you wish to seek advice or support. You can review the policy and related materials at <https://www.doi.gov/employees/anti-harassment>.

As we are also at the beginning of a new performance year, this is a particularly good time to emphasize that we as an organization are serious about holding all supervisors and managers accountable for taking action if they learn of harassing conduct, ethical violations, or other misconduct. These expectations are built into supervisory performance plans and are a vital part of ensuring our office's success.

Lastly, you may remember that each of the Department's Bureau/Office heads were tasked by the Deputy Secretary with designing and implementing an action plan to address harassment-related issues in their organizations. The Office of the Secretary and Bureau of Indian Affairs each have an action plan. There are multiple training opportunities and other programs in development under those action plans that will be announced as they become available. I strongly encourage you to participate in these opportunities as a way to contribute to creating an inclusive and respectful workplace that best serves the American public.

This is an issue that the Secretary, the Deputy Secretary, and I are all committed to because we care about employees and the important work that you do for the American people.

Thank you for your service, and for all you do for Indian Country.

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Tara Sweeney