

The Florida House of Representatives

Office of the Speaker

Richard Corcoran
Speaker

November 20, 2017

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House of Representatives
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker,


There is a welcomed and long overdue wave sweeping this country, led by courageous women telling their painful stories of harassment, abuse, and assault. I have deep gratitude and admiration for these women because their stories, now at the forefront of the national discourse on sexual harassment, will ensure that action is taken and progress is realized.

Unfortunately, through recent reports I've learned that Congress established a hush fund, which has paid over \$17 million to more than 250 Congressional employees to make harassment claims go away. Sexual harassment is wrong and cannot be tolerated, but to add insult to injury, we're finding out that the American taxpayer is footing the bill to keep victims silent. That is not just wrong—it confirms all the worst suspicions voters hold about Congress.

Here in Florida, we are not without fault. Several elected and political officials have rightfully resigned because victims have bravely stepped forward to blow the whistle on unethical conduct. However, last session the Florida House took important steps to validate the very real problem of sexual harassment. We amended our House rules to explicitly cover sexual harassment, made sexual harassment training mandatory for every House member, and made it easier for the victims of harassment to be heard.

I ask you to please bring a swift end to this perverse hush fund—it is not only the right thing to do, but it is also a needed step towards regaining the trust of the taxpayer. I encourage you to not stop there; Congress should follow the lead of the Florida House in making it easier for victims to be heard. I truly believe that meaningful reforms are not only necessary and urgent, but they will also have a significant impact on improving the well-being of our great society.

Sincerely,



Speaker Richard Corcoran
Florida House of Representative