



Washington State Senate

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Senator John McCoy, Chair
Facilities and Operations Committee
Legislative Building 305
Olympia, WA 98504-0409

September 12, 2019

Dear Sen. McCoy,

I have completed my review of Tara Parker's September 8 "Report of Inquiry Regarding Allegations by Senator Mona Das."

One section stood out at the bottom of page 6:

"Several senators, including members of color, also stated that they were very dismayed by Sen. Das' statements before the Kent Chamber of Commerce. First, they were upset because her assertion that members said sexist and racist things in the caucus room was untrue and disparaging."

Specifically, in her June 25, 2019, speech to the Kent Chamber of Commerce, Sen. Das twice said that behind closed doors she heard statements of "hate, sexism, racism and misogyny" from members of the Senate Democratic Caucus. On a third occasion she left out the "hate," but said that behind closed doors in the Senate Democratic caucus room, "the racism and the sexism and the misogyny that we experience is real."

I am very happy for your members that the investigator found that Sen. Das' statements were not true.

Now that our investigator has determined that Sen. Das made false allegations of demeaning and derogatory behavior by members of the Senate, it is now up to the Facilities and Operations Committee to decide what the consequences should be for Sen. Das.

I am troubled by several details regarding this case.

First, the report observes that when Sen. Das was confronted about her false statements, she denied that she made them. Instead, she wrote on Facebook that a reporter had mischaracterized her words.

Fortunately, a recording of Sen. Das' speech surfaced shortly after she made this claim. The tape made clear that the reporter's story was completely accurate, and that Das' denial was untruthful. Based on the documentation in the tape, Sen. Das was then forced to apologize to the reporter.

Second, although it has been determined that Sen. Das' statements were untruthful, some have tried to transform a case of false accusation into a discussion of "institutional racism."

Sen. Das did not tell the truth. That is not institutional racism. Sen. Das made SPECIFIC and harmful allegations of racism and sexism within the Senate Democratic Caucus. Those charges were found to be false. Our duty is to decide what should happen because of that.

No one should make false and reckless allegations of racist and sexist conduct against innocent individuals or organizations. An even higher duty should exist for members of the Senate, particularly when they accuse fellow members of misconduct.

Indeed, our Senate Policy on Appropriate Workplace Conduct states:

“Other Offensive Conduct

No Senator or employee shall engage in any behavior that a reasonable person would find to be ...demeaning or derogatory toward another...

If we are to take our Appropriate Workplace Conduct Policy seriously, we – as the committee that oversees the conduct of the Senate – must acknowledge that a senator falsely accusing colleagues of racist and sexist behavior is demeaning and derogatory and in violation of the policy.

Here are a number of actions I believe we should consider as a committee:

- Requiring reimbursement of the public funds required for the investigation, including the 30 hours of staff time expended by the investigator in determining the falsity of Sen. Das’ claims.
- Seeking a public apology from Sen. Das to all members she accused, focusing solely on her false statements, rather than on extraneous issues.
- Issuing a written reprimand on behalf of the Facilities and Operations Committee.
- Proposing a motion of formal censure by the entire Senate.

There are other actions we could take, but at a minimum, these four should be on the table for discussion at our next meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randi W. Becker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Sen. Randi Becker
2nd Legislative District