

# PRESS RELEASE



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## **SOUTH DAKOTA LEGISLATIVE LEADERS ANNOUNCE HARASSMENT, PROFESSIONALISM AND CODE OF CONDUCT TRAINING**

**PIERRE** – The leadership of the South Dakota Legislature have arranged for training on legislative ethics, professionalism and sexual harassment. The training will take place the afternoon of January 17, 2018, and all elected legislators and legislative staff are expected to attend.

Senate Majority Leader R. Blake Curd, M.D., R-District 12 (Sioux Falls), said, "The Legislature takes sexual harassment seriously and it will not be tolerated."

"The safety, security and professionalism of the South Dakota Legislature and those with whom we interact are of paramount importance. While we have the ability to address unprofessional, unethical and inappropriate behavior of our elected members and legislative staff, we also understand that South Dakota citizens want to ensure that people in elected office conduct themselves in a way that represents the State professionally and ensures the safety and security of those engaged in the people's business. Demonstrating our collective commitment in this regard, South Dakota's Legislative leaders have arranged harassment, professionalism and code of conduct training for January 17, 2018," said Senator Curd.

"I would like to personally thank Senator Deb Peters, R-District 9 (Hartford), for her assistance in garnering the resources for this important topic. Her service as President of the National Conference of State Legislatures has facilitated access by the South Dakota State Legislature to some of the nation's most respected authorities and presenters in these fields. I look forward to the training in January and believe it will be an invaluable and educational experience for all," said Senator Curd.

Senate Minority Leader Billie H. Sutton, D-District 21 (Burke), echoed the importance of action on this topic, saying, "South Dakotans expect and deserve a government that is honorable and respectable. This training is the first step in the right direction to help ensure we have a culture of integrity and professionalism in Pierre that we can all be proud of. As elected officials, we must be held to the highest standards of good and ethical conduct. We must continually be listening to the people we represent and taking action to ensure we are doing all we can to promote a principled state government that supports equality and opportunity for everyone."

House Majority Leader Lee Qualm, R-District 21 (Platte), stated, "In light of the current national allegations regarding sexual harassment, I am excited the leadership of the South Dakota Legislature is moving pro-actively to ensure all elected legislators and legislative staff have an opportunity to participate in this training. As leaders, we take this topic seriously and expect all members and staff to attend. Integrity, ethical conduct, respect and professionalism are demonstrated every day in legislators and staff. This training will strengthen these great qualities."

House Minority Leader Spencer Hawley, D-District 7 (Brookings), also commented, "Everyone expects to be able to work in a safe, harassment-free environment. This training is an important step for the SD Legislature to take to help ensure the professionalism and highest ethical standards from our elected officials and staff."