

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 10, 2019

The Honorable Christopher Wray
Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation
935 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20535

Dear Director Wray:

We are writing to express our profound concern about the allegations of harassment and discrimination voiced by 16 current and former FBI employees. All 16 current and former employees had outstanding records and strove to become special agents or analysts but were discharged from the FBI Training Academy for behavior that was tolerated in male trainees.

According to media reports, women trainees were penalized and dismissed at significantly higher rates than their male counterparts and subjected to sexist and inappropriate comments and behavior. One trainee was discharged from the Academy for lacking emotional maturity because she disagreed with her instructor, while a male trainee who had an emotional outburst after receiving instructor critique was not sanctioned for his behavior and was allowed to graduate. Another trainee was subjected to sexually charged comments by her male instructors, including instructors stating women needed to take birth control to control their moods. Yet another trainee, an African American woman, was labeled “spaghetti head” in reference to her braids.

Notably, male trainees were provided opportunities to retest after making mistakes and female trainees were not. As stated in filings with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: “Female trainees are singled out in group tactical exercises because they are perceived as being weak and prone to failure. Male trainees are provided multiple avenues for success, despite their errors. Male trainees are often permitted to retake tactical exams when female trainees are denied the opportunity to do so.”

As you are aware, such discrimination is illegal and actionable. The quality of our national security and federal law enforcement workforce is of great concern to Congress. Americans must be able to trust that the Bureau recruits and trains individuals of the highest ethical standard and judgment. The evidence these women provide about their treatment paints a dismal picture of double standards and sexist attitudes being propagated at the earliest stage in an agent’s career – the exact time when new agents should see model behavior – and a pushing out of qualified and valuable personnel.

We request in the strongest possible way that you give us your personal assurances that none of the women alleging discrimination at the Academy will be further victimized by acts of retaliation in your agency. Federal employees must feel safe to come forward to point out injustice or wrongdoing when they see it, without fear of reprisal. These women deserved a training environment free from harassment and discrimination and we believe the Bureau failed them. With the outpouring of the #MeToo and Time’s Up movements, women are bravely coming forward to share their stories and demand justice. We ask that you demonstrate the same bravery and urgency in addressing these issues infecting the Bureau as these women have shown in exposing them. It’s unacceptable that those who break the law to preserve an archaic status quo do so without consequence. Your

entire workforce suffers, and America is less safe as a result of these unfair practices perpetuating a climate out of step with America's highest values.

We request answers to the following questions:

1. For the last five years, how many women entering the FBI Academy become special agents? What percentage of the total class do these numbers represent? What are the discharge rates for women and men New Agent Trainees? What does the FBI believe accounts for the differences between discharge rates for women and men?
2. What percent of counselors and instructors at the FBI Academy are women? Are women represented in each of the training modules new agent trainees attend? What kind of training do these counselors and instructors receive on how to evaluate a New Agent Trainee? Do any of your instructors receive implicit bias testing or training?
3. When an employee alleges they have been the victim of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation at the Training Academy, what is the average time for an investigation into these claims to be completed? How does the Training Academy ensure those who allege harassment or discrimination are protected from retaliation? Please provide data on the number of harassment, discrimination, or related retaliation claims at the Training Academy and their outcomes for the last five years.
4. When current FBI employees are discharged from New Agent Training, why are they not allowed to return to their previous position or grade level within the Bureau? Do you conduct exit surveys of trainees who are discharged from the Academy?
5. Do your climate surveys for FBI employees include questions about perceived harassment, discrimination or related retaliation? Does your climate survey protect employees who allege harassment, discrimination, or retaliation? Please provide a copy of the employee climate survey and employee climate survey data from the FBI Training Division for the last five years.
6. Will the FBI submit to an independent review of the workplace culture at the Training Academy and training evaluation processes?

In the event you do not maintain statistics addressing any of these questions, please explain why such data are unavailable, given the FBI's stated intent to increase diversity in its workforce and publicized plans to recruit more women and minorities.

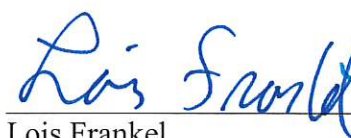
As Director of the FBI you should share our urgency in ensuring trainees are able to learn free from harassment, discrimination, and retaliation. The FBI should not tolerate unlawful behavior. Rather, the FBI should be working to foster a dignified and inclusive environment for all its trainees. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and your prompt response by July 24, 2019.

Sincerely,



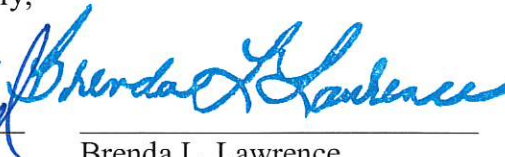
Jackie Speier
Co-Chair

Democratic Women's Caucus



Lois Frankel
Co-Chair

Democratic Women's Caucus



Brenda L. Lawrence
Co-Chair

Democratic Women's Caucus



Veronica Escobar
Vice Chair

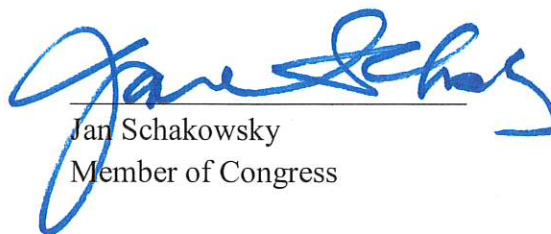
Democratic Women's Caucus

Deb Haaland
Vice Chair

Democratic Women's Caucus



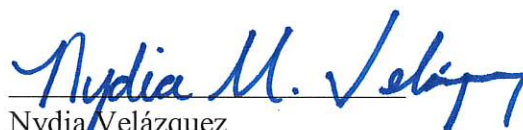
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Anthony Brown
Member of Congress



Nydia Velázquez
Member of Congress



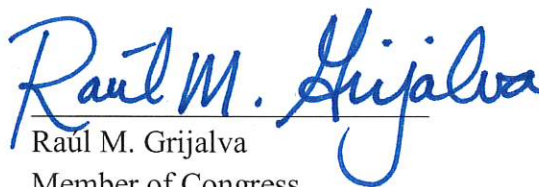
Katie Hill
Member of Congress



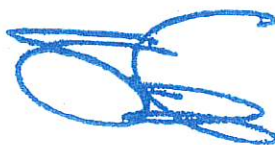
Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



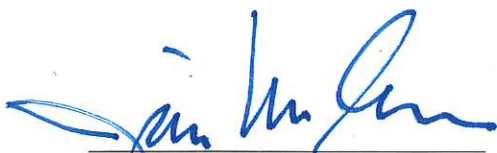
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress




Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



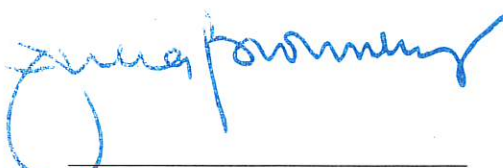
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress