

For Immediate Release: February 24, 2022

Press Contact: Alexandria Taylor, Deputy Director, [alexandriat@nmcsap.org](mailto:alexandriat@nmcsap.org)

### **NMCSAP Responds to Reports of Sexual Harassment and Abuse by Senator Daniel Ivey-Soto**

On February 22, 2022, an open letter written by lobbyist Marianna Anaya to Senator Daniel Ivey-Soto detailing accounts of sexual harassment and abuse was released by the press. NMCSAP has worked with Marianna in official capacities on media and legislative campaigns, including during the most recent legislative session to increase funding for survivors and to introduce a bill to require affirmative consent be taught in schools. We are upset that Marianna has experienced such harm while advocating tirelessly for survivors and our communities across the state.

The New Mexico Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs (NMCSAP) condemns all forms of sexual harassment, assault, and abusive behavior. Elected officials who choose to wield their power in an abusive manner must be held accountable. Every time a person speaks about the sexual abuses of power, it creates space for others to acknowledge what they have also experienced. To those who are survivors, whether you choose to speak about it or not, know that we believe you and there are resources available to support you.

#### **Sexual Harassment and Abuse is an Expression of Power**

Sexual harassment and abuse are never acceptable in any workplace, including in our state legislature. Sexual harassment and abuse are not about desire, sexuality, or humor. They are solely about power. Power unchecked cedes nothing. Sexual harassment and abuse happen in a workplace that exhibits a culture of abuse. As we stated last year after abuses of power were displayed on the Senate Floor, this will continue without meaningful accountability and action.

This behavior must not be tolerated within our state legislature. It has created a hostile and unsafe work environment for those who have been harmed directly and indirectly.

#### **Shock, Denial, and Victim Blaming are Gaslighting Behaviors**

Sexual harassment and abuse are underreported because those who have been harmed are often dismissed and blamed. There is no correct timeline for disclosing, particularly when the person causing harm holds such power. In fact, it is very common for survivors to wait to come forward,

often out of fear of those very repercussions. We recognize Marianna's courage in choosing to report what happened to her. We denounce any response that seeks to deny or blame Marianna for the harm caused to her. Denial and victim blaming are tactics meant to maintain power and undermine the other individual's memory of the harm caused to them. This furthers the harm and continues to create a hostile and unsafe work environment within the state legislature.

We are disappointed in Senator Ivey-Soto's responses to the sexual harassment and abuse allegations. The Senator has engaged in behavior best described as "DARVO", a term coined by Dr. Jennifer Freyd, is a tactic frequently used by people who have been confronted after doing harm. The accused **denies** that the behavior occurred, **attacks** the individual(s) accusing or confronting them, and **reverses** the roles of **victim** and **offender**.

### **Survivors Deserve Accountability**

Survivors get to name what justice and healing means for them. NMCSAP stands with Marianna's call for Senator Ivey-Soto to resign and for the leadership of the New Mexico Senate to refer her complaint for a full investigation and take meaningful action to hold him accountable.

We expect the state legislature to condemn sexual assault and harassment by members of its body and to take swift action in investigating and repairing all claims of harassment and abuse.

We believe people can grow and change. While we wait for the investigation to be completed, we invite Senator Ivey-Soto to proactively seek support to identify and acknowledge the ways in which he has caused harm, and to take true accountability for those actions. This includes a sincere apology that does not gaslight those who he has harmed and changing his behavior so that this harm, abuse, and violence does not continue.

### **Seeking Institutional Change in the Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Assault**

Just as the national conversation about sexual violence has evolved over the last decade, and state houses have had to reckon with institutional failure to prevent sexual harassment and assault, New Mexico must have its own reckoning. This must include looking at ourselves with rigor and honesty, creating a culture of consent in the institutions that govern us, and holding elected officials to the same standards as all others who don't hold similar positions of power.

**Resources for Survivors**

If you or someone you know is in need of support during this time please reach out to any of the resources below:

National Sexual Assault Hotline: 800-656-HOPE (4673) or [Chat Online](#)  
StrongHearts Native Helpline: 1-844-7NATIVE (762-8483)  
New Mexico Asian Family Center (*Support available in Vietnamese, Japanese, Mandarin, Cantonese, Farsi/Dari*): 505-717-2877  
Casa Fortaleza (*Support available in Spanish and English*): 505-485-4826  
Rape Crisis Center of Central New Mexico (Albuquerque): 505-266-7711  
Alternatives to Violence (Clayton): 575-643-5335  
Sexual Assault Services of NW NM (Farmington): 505-326-4700  
(Gallup): 866-908-4700  
La Piñon Sexual Assault Recovery Services (Las Cruces): 575-526-3437  
Valencia Shelter Services (Los Lunas): 505-864-1383  
Arise Sexual Assault Services (Portales): 575-226-7263  
Solace Crisis Treatment Center (Santa Fe): 800-721-7273  
Silver Regional Sexual Assault Support Services (Silver City): 866-750-6474  
Community Against Violence (Taos): 575-758-9888  
Or visit <https://nmcsap.org/find-help/>

Signed,

New Mexico Coalition of Sexual Assault  
Programs  
Statewide

Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native  
Women  
Statewide

Alternatives to Violence  
Clayton, NM and Raton, NM

The Arc of NM Sexual Assault Advocacy  
Program  
Albuquerque, NM

Arise Sexual Assault Services  
Portales, NM and Clovis, NM

Casa Fortaleza  
Albuquerque, NM

Community Against Violence  
Taos, NM

La Pinon Sexual Assault Recovery Services  
and Child Advocacy Center  
Las Cruces, NM

New Mexico Asian Family Center  
Albuquerque, NM

Rape Crisis Center of Central NM  
Albuquerque, NM

Sexual Assault Services of Northwest NM  
Farmington, NM and Gallup, NM

Silver Regional Sexual Assault Services  
Silver City, NM

Solace Crisis Treatment Center  
Santa Fe, NM

Valencia Shelter Services  
Los Lunas, NM