



NEW YORK STATE SENATE
ALBANY, NY 12247

ALESSANDRA BIAGGI
SENATOR

Steve Burke
Chief Executive Officer
NBCUniversal
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10112

Jeff Shell
Incoming Chief Executive Officer
NBC Universal
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10112

December 17th, 2019

Dear Mr. Burke and Mr. Shell,

We write as members of the New York State Legislature to express our concern about allegations of a toxic workplace environment at NBCUniversal. There is growing evidence of a culture that silences victims of harassment and those who report inappropriate workplace behavior at NBC.

NBCUniversal's recent decision not to renew Gabrielle Union's contract on *America's Got Talent* is just the latest example of a concerning pattern of behavior on the part of NBC. Union was allegedly let go after raising concerns about racist jokes made on set and having been told repeatedly that her hairstyles were "too black." These allegations represent unacceptable workplace behavior that no one should be subject to, let alone terminated for reporting. We are grateful that NBC has committed to Union that they will investigate her allegations and termination. However, NBC must be transparent about the findings of their investigation and take concrete steps to reform the toxic culture throughout the company.

Union's experience is only one example of the systemic silencing of victims of harassment and those who have spoken up at NBC. As reported extensively by Ronan Farrow and others, NBC ignored complaints of sexual misconduct against Matt Lauer and stymied Farrow's reporting on Harvey Weinstein while at NBC. Farrow has also reported that at least seven women have signed non-disclosure agreements with the company after alleging sexual harassment, including individuals who made complaints about Lauer before November 2017.

Since these allegations became public, NBC has failed to reckon with its role in silencing victims. Although NBC conducted an investigation into its handling of allegations against Lauer, it was led by NBCUniversal General Counsel, Kimberly Harris. In contrast, other news organizations, including CBS, Fox News, and NPR, have chosen to hire outside law firms to lend greater credibility to their own investigations of workplace misconduct. Despite calls from former NBC News employees, including Megyn Kelly and Linda Vester for an external investigation, NBC has told the press that it does not intend to conduct an external investigation.

As a leading national broadcast network, NBC must do better. The network's biggest stars shape the media landscape around the country; they moderate Presidential debates and interview global leaders. NBCUniversal sets a standard for the world.


This year New York State led the way, overhauling our laws around sexual harassment to provide stronger protections for employees and make clear that employers have a responsibility to create a safe work environment for their employees. NBCUniversal shares in that responsibility. The toxic workplace culture at NBC impacts the news anchors and television hosts — but it also impacts the thousands of employees who work on sets, in production offices, in the field, and in operations in New York and across the country.

As members of the New York State Legislature, we have a duty to shine a light on the toxic culture and uplift the voices of New Yorkers who face harassment, assault, and discrimination in their workplaces. We call on NBCUniversal to take this opportunity to reshape its company culture. We urge the company to take concrete and transparent steps to make it clear to its employees that the company values their safety in the workplace and takes allegations of misconduct seriously.


Sincerely,



Alessandra Biaggi
New York State Senator, District 34



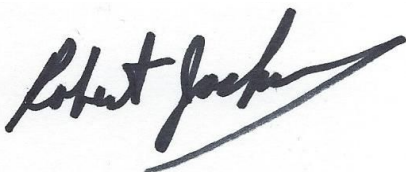
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David Carlucci
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New York State Senator, District 27



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New York State Assemblymember, District 36