

Impact of Workplace Sexual Harassment on New Yorkers:

Advance Findings from Cornell ILR Worker Institute Forthcoming Report

Quid pro quo workplace sexual harassment impacts approximately one in 10 New York state residents, according to “Findings on Workplace Sexual Harassment from the 2018 Empire State Poll,” a report being released this spring by the Cornell ILR School’s Worker Institute.

In 2018, ILR Extension faculty member KC Wagner, with colleagues Sanjay Pinto and Zoë West, included questions in the Cornell Survey Research Institute’s annual Empire State Poll to scale the extent of workplace sexual harassment in New York state. Findings from the responses of 800 randomly selected households included:

- **Quid pro quo workplace sexual harassment is widespread across New York state.** One in 10 New Yorkers above the age of 18 report experiencing quid pro quo workplace sexual harassment where “someone in a position of authority at [their] workplace [tried] to trade job benefits for sexual favors.”
- **The toxic impact of sexism is complex and far reaching.** Workplace sexual harassment is often characterized as a women’s issue, which it is, but it is also a men’s issue. While 12.2 percent of women in Pinto, Wagner, and West’s poll report quid pro quo sexual harassment at work, 9.5 percent of men also did – almost one in 10 of the men responding.
- **Quid pro quo sexual harassment disproportionately affects people of color.** Those of Hispanic origin and people of color were statistically significantly more likely to say they experienced quid pro quo sexual harassment at some point over the course of their working careers than their non-Hispanic white counterparts. 13.9 percent of people of color and those of Hispanic origin in New York state said they had experienced quid pro quo workplace sexual harassment, compared to 8.5 percent of non-Hispanic whites.
- **Quid pro quo workplace sexual harassment impacts work and career paths of New Yorkers.** For those saying they experienced quid pro quo workplace sexual harassment, nearly half (48.9 percent) reported that these experiences “had an impact on [their] work life ... career advancement ... or ability to obtain, keep, or perform a job.”
- **New Yorkers want their leaders to address workplace sexual harassment.** More than 80 percent of New York state residents (83.4 percent) think “elected officials and business, union, and other community leaders in New York State should do more to address problems of workplace sexual harassment and violence.” By party identification, 90.5 percent of those self-identifying as Democrats, 83.0 percent self-identifying as Independents and 68.1 percent of those self-identifying as Republicans in the poll agreed that political, business, organizational and community leaders in the state should do more to address workplace sexual harassment and violence overall.

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1 in 10 adult New Yorkers report experiencing "someone in a position of authority trying to trade job benefits for sexual favors" at their workplace.



Training based in behavior and culture change:

Through the ILR School's Equity at Work initiative within The Worker Institute, KC Wagner, who for more than 30 years has specialized in the prevention of sexual harassment, gender bias and bullying, and in promoting workplace inclusiveness, has created innovative training programs for workers in male-dominated workplaces and for high school students. These trainings include:

- A domestic violence "men and women as allies" initiative as a labor-management initiative that has provided training for more than 1,600 workers. Of those who said before training that they would have done nothing to help an employee or union member experiencing domestic violence, seven out of 10 said they would now do something to help because of the training.
- A program for juniors and seniors in vocational high school that brings sexual harassment into anti-bullying training. With a multi-racial and intergenerational training team, in collaboration with the Westchester Board of Cooperative Educational Services, the initiative has reached over 500 junior and seniors, providing anti-harassment training before they enter the workplace fulltime.

Linda Barrington, ILR associate dean of outreach and sponsored research, shared preliminary findings from the study, along with other insights, Feb. 13 at a New York State Senate and Assembly hearing in Albany on sexual harassment in the workplace.

About The Worker Institute

The Worker Institute at Cornell engages in research and education on contemporary labor issues, to generate innovative thinking and solutions to problems related to work, economy and society. The institute brings together researchers, educators and students with practitioners in labor, business and policymaking to confront growing economic and social inequalities, in the interests of working people and their families. A core value of the Worker Institute is that collective representation and workers' rights are vital to a fair economy, robust democracy and just society.