

Hayes, Kathy

From: Leila Roberts <leilaroberts777@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 31, 2023 9:58 AM
To: Arroyo, Natalie
Subject: Re: Workforce 2030 and Mr Bohn incident on Jan. 27

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
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Dear Natalie:

Three nights ago your fellow County Supervisor Rex Bohn made a sexualized joke about a business owner in front of a packed room of more than two hundred business and community leaders gathered to celebrate the region's most effective, most generous institutions.

I watched her face fall, even as she was surrounded by friends and admirers. I saw disgust, confusion, stunned silence among some audience members who heard the comment. A few laughed uncomfortably. This event was a triumphant and joyful return to in-person celebration for an organization also led by one of our community's most extraordinary women leaders. How can Mr. Bohn have taken this as an opportunity to demean one of the event's donors?

This business owner, no one will be surprised to hear, is a woman. Her business is one of our county's leading lights: they run a great shop, are deeply generous, and are well-loved and respected. They've made it through some very challenging ups and downs, and continue to thrive as a major employer and taxpayer.

But their success apparently doesn't protect them from casual, public, sexist contempt. Protecting them can be our job, which is why I'm writing to you asking that you'll read my comments into the record during tomorrow's discussion about the County's workplace culture, titled "Introduction of Workplace 2030! - A Comprehensive Organizational Development and Culture Change Initiative". I'm very sorry my schedule doesn't allow me to join live.

I want Mr. Bohn held to the same standard of accountability as any executive or public servant. Bawdy humor can be fun: in private, among close friends, delivered in a way that no one is demeaned. What Mr. Bohn did, however, was a classic expression of hostile sexism. It's not funny; nor is it a small glitch. Disparaging humor is a classic strategy to delegitimize, devalue, and dehumanize a member of another group. It's a widely studied phenomenon with reams of data to back up how damaging this can be. There are currently 1.24 million women-owned employer firms in the country, and studies show over and over how many left their former firms because of discrimination in the workplace, only to encounter discrimination as entrepreneurs as well.

I sometimes recommend business owners turn to their state, city, and county electeds when they need help navigating difficult policies or situations. Is it wise to send business owners who are women and trans or non-binary to work with Mr. Bohn? Will they receive the respect they deserve?

I have had a few conversations with peers about this and we agree that the attention here needs to be, not on the insulted business leader, but on the problem: one of our County's most powerful political leaders behaving in a way that dishonors himself, his constituency--including many women business owners, and the County of Humboldt. Apparently this most recent nasty, little joke is only one startling example of a pattern that simply must stop. I don't believe in throwing people out like trash because they've messed up; but I do believe in accountability.

Our region is full of bright, decent men in positions of leadership. I'd like to see them speak up, man to man, about this. The County is committed to cultivating a workplace where everyone thrives. I'd like to see the Board of Supervisors address this unacceptable pattern of behaviour with their peer.

Thank you for having a conversation about this with me, Natalie. I so appreciate that you're taking this seriously.

All the best,

Leila Roberts
Humboldt Hill

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Messaging you from Raqlhirilh Hulumou'lilh, in unceded Wiyot Lands

Pronunciation: namedrop.io/leilaroberts

She, They

[Why sharing gender pronouns at work matters](#) (blog post from Alexis Crosswell)

[Why I put pronouns on my LinkedIn profile](#) (short video from Craig Forman)

Turner, Nicole

From: Arroyo, Natalie
Sent: Tuesday, January 31, 2023 3:16 PM
To: Turner, Nicole; Hayes, Kathy
Cc: Hayes, Elishia
Subject: Fw: Inappropriate comments

Letter 2.

From: John Frahm <jfracm@ucfw5.org>
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2023 9:21 PM
To: Bohn, Rex <RBohn@co.humboldt.ca.us>; Arroyo, Natalie <narroyo@co.humboldt.ca.us>; Bushnell, Michelle <mbushnell@co.humboldt.ca.us>; Wilson, Mike <Mike.Wilson@co.humboldt.ca.us>; Madrone, Steve <smadrone@co.humboldt.ca.us>
Subject: Inappropriate comments

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Dear Supervisors Arroyo, Bohn, Bushnell, Madrone, and Wilson,

It has come to my attention that Supervisor Bohn made incredibly inappropriate and insensitive comments this past Friday at the Eureka Chamber event in regards to a female business owner that had made a donation to the auction. If the county is serious about improving the culture of the county to be more inclusive, then it starts with those in a position of power leading the change.

For Supervisor Bohn to make this kind of comment (that the donor would serve the recipient topless) undermines everything that the county is trying to accomplish. Change starts at the top. If anyone is to be held accountable for their words and actions, then everyone must be accountable. I urge you to publicly denounce these actions and take meaning full steps to ensure all are held accountable.

Sincerely,

John Frahm
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