

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

December 13, 2022

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul,

We write to express our strong concern regarding the sexual misconduct of Ibrahim Khan, chief of staff to Attorney General Letitia James, and the mishandling of the subsequent internal investigation Ms. James's oversaw into the incident. To restore public trust, we ask that you immediately appoint a special prosecutor to investigate both the sexual harassment claims as well as Attorney General James's mishandling of the incident and subsequent internal inquiry.

On December 2, 2022, the New York Times reported that Ms. James's longtime chief of staff Ibrahim Khan had resigned due to at least two sexual harassment allegations.¹ It was previously reported in 2017, that a former employee of New York City's public advocate office, which was run at the time by Ms. James, had accused Mr. Khan of drugging and sexually assaulting her at a December 2014 holiday party.² This claim was further investigated by both the Manhattan district attorney's office and city's Department of Investigation and then closed without any further action. However, it is apparent that by the 2022 investigation of Mr. Khan there were many women who had made allegations of inappropriate touching and kissing against Mr. Khan.³ This long track record of inappropriate and possibly criminal behavior over many years brings into question Ms. James's claim that she was not aware of Mr. Khan's conduct.

According to the attorney general's office, Ms. James claims she did not hear of any accusations until October 3, 2022, at which time her office immediately instructed Mr. Khan to begin working remotely. Ms. James later hired the law firm Littler Mendelson to conduct an independent investigation. However, it is important to note that Littler Mendelson also employs a former employee of Ms. James, Johanne Severin, who specializes in labor and employment matters for the firm.⁴ This connection brings into question the impartiality of this investigation. Furthermore, despite seeking contract approval from Comptroller Thomas Di Napoli while investigating former disgraced Governor Andrew Cuomo, Ms. James's office did not seek contract approval for the investigation into this serious matter in her own office.⁵

These facts bring up serious concerns regarding the office of the attorney general's commitment to oversight and accountability. New Yorkers deserve to know if Ms. James was

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/02/nyregion/ibrahim-khan-james-harassment.html>

² <https://nypost.com/2022/12/07/ny-ag-letitia-james-blasted-by-ex-aide-for-sex-harassment-handling/>

³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/07/nyregion/letitia-james-victim-khan.html>

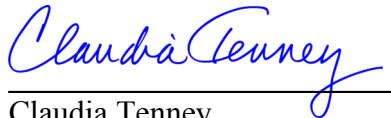
⁴ <https://www.littler.com/people/johanne-severin>

⁵ <https://www.nyl.com/nyc/all-boroughs/politics/2022/12/05/new-york-attorney-general-s-office-faces-questions-over-investigation-that-led-to-resignation-of-top-aide>

truthful when she claimed to have not known about the multiple allegations against Mr. Khan. New Yorkers also deserve to know why Ms. James used a law firm with ties to her staff to investigate the matter and why, unlike in previous cases, she did not seek contract approval for the investigation, which would have created a paper trail. Finally, given that the incident appears to have come to a head so close to the 2022 general election, New Yorkers also deserve to know whether political calculations drove Ms. James decisions in each of these cases to conceal information from other state offices as well as the voting public.

When you took over from disgraced former Governor Andrew Cuomo, you made a commitment to change New York's culture of corruption, which included tackling the reoccurring problem of sexual harassment. All victims of sexual harassment and any other crime deserve to have their allegations heard and fairly investigated. Likewise, those accused also deserve fair, transparent, and accountable investigations. This is exactly what we ask for now: a fair, transparent, and accountable investigation into Ms. James's handling of this incident by an independent special counsel. We look forward to your commitment that the allegations against Mr. Khan and Ms. James's will be fully, independently, and transparently investigated.

Sincerely,



Claudia Tenney
Member of Congress



Elise M. Stefanik
Member of Congress



Chris Jacobs
Member of Congress