

# Sexual Harassment Policy

## **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to protect the members of Philly Socialists from unwanted sexual advances, harassment, contact, and violence. In order to ensure our members' trust and sense of safety, Philly Socialists does not tolerate any form of Sexual Harassment or Sexual Violence as defined in this policy.

Philly Socialists seeks to create a culture that models the just and equal future we hope to build, and, in doing so, discourages sexual violence/abuse. In addition to promoting safety for everyone, the intent of this policy is to create an accountable and respectful environment where people have the opportunity to learn to be allies of those who suffer violence, abuse and discrimination of a sexual nature--values and skills which are so lacking in both mainstream and radical left cultures of today.

## **DEFINITIONS:**

The definition of Sexual Violence includes the illegal activities of rape, incest, child sexual assault, sexual exploitation, and voyeurism, and are under no circumstances tolerated.

Additionally, Philly Socialists does not tolerate Sexual Harassment because it is a form of sex discrimination. The definition of Sexual Harassment expands beyond illegal activities relating to sex. Sexual harassment includes unwanted physical, verbal, or written advances, sexual threats, insinuation of sexual acts, and any unwelcome behaviors which cause a victim to feel uncomfortable, intimidated, unsafe, voiceless, or helpless. Please bear in mind that Sexual Harassment can be explicit or implicit.

## **STATISTICS:**

- 1 in 3 American women will be sexually abused during their lifetime. (WOAR)
- 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men will be sexually assaulted before the age of 18. (WOAR)
- 1 in 8 lesbian women and nearly 1 in 2 bisexual women experience rape in their lifetime. (NCLR)
- 4 in 10 gay men and nearly 1 in 2 bisexual men have experienced sexual violence. (NCLR)
- 64% of people who identify as transgender have experienced sexual assault. (NCLR)
- Approximately 80% of assaults are committed by someone known to the victim. (RAINN)

## **TENETS:**

- Sexual violence is never the fault of the victim/survivor.
- Being an ally is central to being a socialist.

## **SCOPE:**

- This policy applies to all Philly Socialists members and anyone attending Philly Socialists' events, including non-members.
- This policy does not replace police or legal intervention.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY:**

- It is the responsibility of all members to act with compassion towards their comrades.
- It is the responsibility of all members to protect their comrades, intervene when necessary (and safe), and to report troubling behavior immediately after witnessing it, ideally, or at very least in a timely manner after the behavior has been observed.
- It is the responsibility of the leadership of Philly Socialists to take action when issues arise. This includes the Central Committee, branch leaders, project leaders, and arbiters.
- Philly Socialists will not protect offenders from appropriate actions/expulsion.
- Claiming to have no negative intent does not alleviate an individual from an accusation.
- Accused persons do not have the right to apologize privately or publicly. It is up to the accuser if and when they want to receive an apology. It is up to the Arbiter (in communication with the accuser) if and when the accused will be given a platform to publicly apologize.

### **INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS:**

The following activities are inappropriate and constitute as (but are not limited to) sexual harassment regardless of whether or not they are illegal:

- Sexual "joking" and "teasing"
- Use of sexually suggestive language or word choice
- Unwanted sexual flirtations or advances
- Sexual propositions (verbal or written)
- Repeated requests for (denied) dates
- Verbal or written comments about an individual's body, sexuality, appearance, or sexual-orientation
- Using sexually degrading words to describe someone
- Unwanted discussion or questioning about sexual desires, fantasies, experience
- Unwanted sharing of sexually explicit or suggestive objects, cartoons, photos, etc.
- Any physical contact which the receiver considers to be unwelcome, including hugs, pats, pinches, brushing up against someone, etc.
- Unwanted nonverbal communications, such as gawking, whistling, catcalling, etc.
- Inappropriate sexual or degrading gestures
- Inappropriate innuendos
- Unwanted electronic contact- social media, text messages, etc.
- Any sexual contact without consent (drunk/otherwise incapacitated persons cannot consent to sex)
- Coercive sex
- Drugging/pushing alcohol or drugs with the intent to have sex

- Pushing physical boundaries/physical intimidation; this includes groping, violating someone's personal space intentionally, and other forms of non-consensual physical contact

### **CULTURE:**

- Women are often on the receiving end of unwanted contact and members should not further this issue. Members should act to maximize the agency and empowerment of regularly minimized groups.
- Unacceptable behaviors should be called out. Silence is complicitness.
- Efforts must be made to decenter men/maleness/masculinity from the culture of the group.

### **PROCEDURE:**

Philly Socialists will respond to all accusations and complaints within one week of being notified.

When in doubt, the account of the accuser will be believed over the account of the accused.

In the case of sexual violence:

- If a sexual assault/rape is reported to anyone within the organization, the confidante should, notify the Arbiter(s) of their choice.
- Together, the Arbiter(s) and accuser will determine subsequent actions, based on the wishes of the accuser.
- Potential actions include: going to the police; the accused being thenceforth not invited or welcomed to future events, meeting, and gatherings (but not explicitly warned about their behavior); the accused being expelled from Philly Socialists.
- The Arbiter will take all steps necessary to protect the identity of the accuser.
- Once an accuser comes forward, doing nothing is not an option, as the accused could harm other members in the future.
- The Arbiter will let the Central Committee and Branch leaders know that there was an accusation against the accused and the course of action that the accuser decided upon.
- The accuser will let the Arbiter know if they want the Central Committee and/or Branch Leaders to know any details of the accusation.
- The Central Committee may issue a public announcement disassociating the organization with the accused individual, and explaining why; this would both warn other activists as well as inform members and non-members that this individual is not allowed in movement spaces.

In the case of sexual harassment:

- If unwanted attention/personal contact is reported to anyone within the organization, the confidante should, notify the Arbiter(s) of their choice.

- Together, the Arbiter(s) and accuser will determine subsequent actions, based on the severity of the issue and the wishes of the accuser.
- Potential actions include: the accused being given a warning and notified that continued inappropriate behavior will result in expulsion from the group; the accused being thenceforth not invited or welcomed to future events, meeting, and gatherings (but not explicitly warned about their behavior); the accused being expelled from Philly Socialists.
- The Arbiter will take all steps necessary to protect the identity of the accuser.
- Once an accuser comes forward, doing nothing is not an option, as the accused could harm other members in the future.
- The Arbiter will let the Central Committee and Branch leaders know that there was an accusation against the accused and the course of action that the accuser decided upon.
- The accuser will let the Arbiter know if they want the Central Committee and/or Branch Leaders to know any details of the accusation.
- The Central Committee may issue a public announcement disassociating the organization with the accused individual, and explaining why; this would both warn other activists as well as inform members and non-members that this individual is not allowed in movement spaces.

#### **FURTHER STEPS:**

- An anonymous tip line will be added to the Philly Socialists website so inappropriate behavior can be reported without fear of retribution.
- An allyship training will be offered before the end of 2015; all leaders (project, branch, Central Committee) and arbiters are required to attend, and it is suggested that all members attend.
- A guide of supportive resources will be created.
- At every meeting involving new members, there will be a short explanation of Philly Socialists policy and expectations for all members; this will include an explanation of the safe spaces we are creating, what that entails, a brief list of obvious unacceptable behaviors, the existence of our policy, and who to turn to when someone exhibits inappropriate behaviors.
- Three (3) arbiters will be elected to handle increased duties due to this policy, and to mitigate burnout.