



## Avalanche of Calls to Resign Buries Senator Al Franken

Senator Al Franken's demise began with a joke that turned sour, in a photograph that went viral: He appears to be touching the breasts of a woman who is wearing body armor, while she slept. The woman, Leeann Tweeden, a radio host and former model, also came out and said that Franken wrote a skit for a USO show they were in during 2006 for American troops wherein he would kiss her, and he tried to force her to kiss him in rehearsals. Franken said he was just trying to make a joke (he was a comedian before winning a contested election for the Senate in Minnesota in 2008). It was a joke that went bad and has cost Franken his Senate seat. On Thursday morning, at noon Washington time, Franken [ended his senatorial career](#), saying, "Today I am announcing that in the coming weeks, I will be resigning as a member of the United States Senate."



Within two weeks of the bombshell photograph going viral, another woman stepped forward with credible charges of sexual misconduct against Franken. Franken tried again to be funny, responding that he "feels badly" (double-entendre intended) that she felt disrespected by his untoward sexual advances. By the time of his announcement on Thursday morning, more than seven women had come forward charging the Minnesota Democrat with various attempts at sexual predations over the past 10 years or more.

Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer saw the danger of letting Franken off the hook, calling on him personally to resign and then later meeting with Franken and his wife at his apartment, urging him to step down.

This appeared to be coordinated with more than 30 senators, most of them female Democrats, who issued a series of social media blasts on Wednesday demanding that Franken leave the Senate. The first came from Democrat New York Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, who declared on her Facebook page, "Enough is enough," adding, "As elected officials, we should be held to the highest standards — not the lowest. The allegations against Sen. Franken describe behavior that cannot be tolerated. While Senator Franken is entitled to have the Ethics Committee conclude its review, I believe it would be better for our country if he sent a clear message that any kind of mistreatment of women in our society isn't acceptable by stepping aside to let someone else serve."

After talking privately among themselves about what to do about the continuing flow of embarrassing revelations of Franken's behavior, the following senators coordinated their attack through social media: Senators Mazie Hirono of Hawaii, Claire McCaskill of Missouri, Dianne Feinstein of California, Patty



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Murray of Washington State, Kamala Harris of California, Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, Debbie Stabenow of Michigan, Maria Cantwell of Washington State, Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota, Tammy Duckworth of Illinois, and Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire.

It was part of a plan to tie off the Franken disaster before it took down the entire Democrat Party. In what was clearly a message of damage control — what the *New York Times* pathetically called a opportunity to “hold the high ground” in the conversation — DNC chairman Tom Perez raised the art of hypocrisy to an entirely new and unappreciated level:

The Democratic Party will stand up for women and for what is right. Public service is a public trust. If you are a candidate for office or an elected official who has engaged in sexual misconduct, you should step aside — whether you sit in the U.S. House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate or the Oval Office.

Of course, no such negative repercussions came from Democrats against fellow Democrat Senator Ted Kennedy or Democrat Presidents John F. Kennedy and Bill Clinton. Why not, Mr. Perez?

Following Franken’s resignation, Minnesota’s Democrat Governor Mark Dayton will choose a successor, who will take over for Franken until the 2018 elections, when voters in Minnesota can elect someone to finish out his term, which runs until January 2021. Pundits are predicting that, in the interest of avoiding naming someone with similar proclivities, Dayton will choose a woman: perhaps Lt. Gov. Tina Smith or Attorney General Lori Swanson.

What’s especially painful for Democrats is that Franken’s resignation follows that of John Conyers a day earlier, but with this difference: Conyers, at age 88, was well into his dotage and expected to retire soon whereas Franken was on the ascendancy in the Democrat Party, despite his long and well-known record of harassing women under his influence along the way.

It’s also a painful reminder that the charges against Conyers and Franken are real and substantive, whereas those against Judge Roy Moore running in Alabama for Jeff Sessions’ Senate seat are mainly considered by likely voters in next Tuesday’s election to be frivolous and false. If Franken were allowed to keep his seat, Roy Moore’s arrival would provide unavoidable and painful grist for Republicans in the upcoming midterms: that Democrats are willing to put up with such behavior from one of their own while making hypocritical charges against Moore. In other words, the evidence of hypocrisy and double standards of behavior by Democrats versus Republicans would be evident every day the Senate is in session.

After all, it was Minnesota Senator Al Franken who had been viewed as an ally of victims of sexual violence, calling those who came forward with their stories of sexual harassment in the workplace “courageous.”

It turns out that that was just another bad joke. Franken won’t be missed.

Image of Al Franken: Screenshot of a [video on Senate.gov](#)

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