



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on March 23, 2021

Cuomo Accuser's Attorneys Alarmed That His People Are Conducting Independent Probe. Truthful Victims, Witnesses Could Fear Retaliation

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo's [capos](#) are independently investigating an employee's allegation that Cuomo grabbed her breast.

The news greatly concerns attorneys for the women.

Feminist lawyer Deborah Katz, who represents accuser Charlotte Bennett, has written to New York Attorney General Letitia James to say she must stop Cuomo's probe. It might, she wrote, intimidate victims who haven't come forward, as well as witnesses who fear for their jobs.



AP Images

James is also investigating the breast-fondling accusation, along with seven others. An [eighth woman surfaced](#) over the weekend to accuse Cuomo.

Our Own Look

"We have our own inquiries ongoing," an [unidentified Cuomo capo told](#) Albany's *Times Union*. "We have an obligation to investigate any claim of sexual harassment. And we, after reporting [the female aide's allegations] to the [attorney general], were directed to continue our own inquiry.... So there are multiple inquiries."

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The *Times Union* disclosed the woman's allegation two weeks ago. [She told](#) a supervisor about the matter after she became upset as she and co-workers watched Cuomo deny he touched any woman "inappropriately."

"We fully informed the [attorney general's] office of the required process with this type of allegation and they said to follow it," Cuomo's top attorney told the newspaper. "The matter was referred to GOER [Governor's Office of Employee Relations] and [we] informed local law enforcement and that is the full extent of the action."

The GOER normally probes a sexual-harassment allegation within the executive chamber, but now, apparently, Cuomo is striking out on his own. That's what he did when his "office handled the sexual harassment allegations of another female aide, Charlotte Bennett, without referring the matter to GOER," the [Times Union reported](#).

Cuomo's people also told staffers that his office would provide an attorney when and if the attorney general's investigators interview them. That offer "has unsettled some staff members ... because they



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are concerned about the implications of relying on an attorney provided by the Executive Chamber to potentially sit in on their interviews with the attorney general's investigators."

James's office said no one told Cuomo to spearhead his own investigation, and an attorney for the woman called Cuomo's independent investigation "absurd."

"It's not appropriate, and obviously we're concerned with the ramifications and the effect on witnesses and the quest for the truth," [he told](#) the *Times Union*.

"Highly Improper"

Bennett's attorney, Katz, said Cuomo's independent probe might compromise victims and witnesses. Lawyers who work for his office should not contact victims and witnesses, [she wrote](#) to James.

Cuomo's attorneys are meeting with witnesses before and after interviews with James's investigators, a move Katz called "highly improper."

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Cuomo's providing in-house attorneys to accompany staffers to interviews, then debrief them afterward, Katz wrote, "will have a chilling effect on potential witnesses or other accusers who wish to come forward but fear job-related retaliation if they tell the investigators about the Governor's sexual harassing behavior and the misconduct of those around him"

Katz said witnesses have told her they are intimidated and fear telling the truth about Cuomo's "with the Governor's lawyers present."

The independent investigation is a "deliberate attempt" to sabotage James's probe, she wrote.

Concluded Katz:

Though your office did not officially respond to questions about the Executive Chamber's parallel investigation into these allegations, a source within your office denied that it had "directed" the Chamber to undertake it. Coupled with the Executive Chamber's failure to adequately address Ms. Bennett's allegations, this maneuver clearly demonstrates its unwillingness to use the proper channels for reporting and investigating complaints of sexual harassment.

It therefore is critical that you issue a public statement clarifying that the Attorney General's office was not made aware of and did not approve the Executive Chamber's internal "inquiry" into allegations of sexual harassment and assault, which is being conducted in violation of the Governor's own Executive Order. Otherwise, this unauthorized parallel investigation will continue to undermine the legitimacy of the thorough, independent investigation being conducted by your office.

Katz also represented Christine Blasey Ford, the feminist crackpot who said U.S. Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh sexually assaulted her when the two were in high school. [Ford's own witnesses](#) "[refuted](#)" or "failed to corroborate" her dramatic claims, which she lodged at the 11th hour of Kavanaugh's confirmation hearings.

Katz refused to release documentary evidence that supposedly proved Ford's claims to the Senate Judiciary Committee despite three requests from Chairman Charles Grassley (R-Iowa).

In Bennett, Katz might have [a better client](#), as [seven other women](#) offer similar and [credible allegations](#).



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