**We’re Sick and Tired of the Old Boys Club**

If I had a dollar for every time a man in power said something sexist to a woman because he believed he’d get away with it, I’d probably have enough money to pay off my crippling student loan debt. If I had another dollar every time they tried to gaslight their way out of it, I could probably get my master’s degree debt-free.

Thisweek, unfortunately, makes my case even stronger. As reporter Allison Donahue tried to ask Senator Peter Lucido questions about a private Facebook group he belonged to—one that said violent and sexist things about the Governor—he told the young reporter that a group of high school boys he was giving a tour to [“could have a lot of fun with](https://www.michiganadvance.com/2020/01/15/i-tried-to-interview-sen-peter-lucido-he-told-me-a-group-of-schoolboys-could-have-a-lot-of-fun-with-me/)” her. When the Senator was called out for his remarks, he first gave a half-assed apology to the reporter on twitter. When the story went global, he began to play the victim, saying he’s been [misunderstood and misquoted](https://www.fox2detroit.com/news/sen-ludico-says-female-reporter-misquoted-him-about-inappropriate-comment). It’s a tale as old as time.

And while some may have thought the Lucido allegation was a one-off incident — let’s be honest with ourselves, it rarely is—[Senator Mallory McMorrow filed a report against Lucido](https://www.crainsdetroit.com/government/michigan-senator-lodges-new-sexual-harassment-complaint-against-lucido) about a sexual harassment incident that happened during the 2018 legislative orientation—which included a training on sexual harassment in the workplace.

This isn’t the first time the Old Boys Club in the Legislature has gotten off scot-free or tried to manipulate their way out of consequences about their sexism. In the ‘90s, former Senator Lana Pallock was subjected to [physical and verbal sexual harassment on a daily basis](http://news.jrn.msu.edu/2017/12/women-say-sexism-still-exists-in-michigan-legislature/), and as recently as 2012, Barb Byrum and Lisa Brown were banned from speaking on the floor for using the words [“vasectomy,” and “vagina,”](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jun/15/michigan-politician-banned-using-word-vagina) while discussing an anti-abortion bill.

Within the last year, House Speaker Lee Chatfield used typical sexist rhetoric to belittle powerful women in our state government. While being interviewed on the radio, he accused Governor Gretchen Whitmer and A.G. Dana Nessel for being [“driven by emotion”](https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2019/04/03/chatfield-whitmer-nessel-emotion-line-5/3350532002/?fbclid=IwAR18OA6CQld5pohmH5916EVC4E4QCPtCtIsBT2jFXQaLW_7SyAbsS7_sgV4), not science, when discussing Line 5 through the Mackinac Straits.

The sexist comments from Republican leadership didn’t end there. Just weeks after comparing abortion to slavery, Majority Leader Mike Shirkey called Governor Whitmer [“batshit crazy”](https://www.michiganradio.org/post/state-majority-leader-mike-shirkey-calls-gov-whitmer-batshit-crazy) during a college visit. That’s what men do when they feel threatened by powerful women: They go as low as they can. They make women appear as if they’re too emotional to lead, not logical enough to hold power.

How do we end madness? First, we don’t allow men who think they hold all the power to continue making comments like these and passing them off as normal behavior. Second, we elect more women, trans, and gender non-conforming people to the legislature. And lastly, we make sure that when men abuse their power to try and get the upper-hand on someone, they are called out for their sexism and held accountable. The Old Boys Club must be put to rest, and the locker room talk must end.