

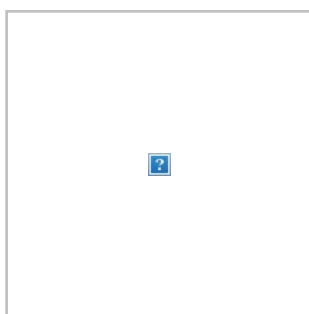
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New York Attorney General Letitia James joins protestors on May 3, 2022, in Manhattan. Alexander R. West/ALM

## Former AG Press Secretary Sues Former Boss for Alleged Sexual Harassment, and Letitia James for Failing to Prevent Assault

In a statement, a spokesman for James' office said: "We took the allegations brought to our office seriously and engaged in decisive, prompt, and appropriate action."

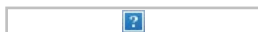
December 15, 2022 at 05:35 PM

5 minute read

Civil Procedure



**Brian Lee**



Litigation Reporter

New York Attorney General Letitia James failed to stop her former top aide from sexually assaulting a former office press secretary during a political fundraiser at a Brooklyn bar 13 months ago, a state lawsuit filed on Thursday said.

Filed by Wigdor, plaintiff Sofia Quintanar’s complaint in state trial court in Manhattan and the Court of Claims are against James’ former chief of staff, Ibrahim Khan, but also names James, the AG’s office and her campaign as co-defendants, for permitting and failing to prevent Khan’s alleged assault.

Khan recently resigned from his position in the AG’s office amid an internal probe of the allegations.

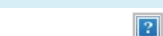
In a statement, a spokesman for James’ office said: “We took the allegations brought to our office seriously and engaged in decisive, prompt, and appropriate action.”

The incident occurred outside the bar on Nov. 17, 2021, and the complaint leverages a new lookback law that aims to protect adult victims of past sexual assaults.

Khan, who was described in the trial court lawsuit as “one of the most powerful men in New York state politics,” attended the fundraiser with James, who was slated to give a speech.

Quintanar went to network and find a new position in politics or government, according to the lawsuit.

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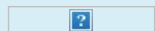
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Khan had asked to speak privately to Quintanar outside the bar, and while there, he placed his hand on her shoulder and forcibly kissed her, shoving his tongue down her throat, the complaint read.

Quintanar pushed him back and asked: “Aren’t you married? Don’t you have kids? What are you doing?” according to the complaint.

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Khan ignored Quintanar and moved forward to kiss her, the complaint alleged. She had to step back to avoid him, the suit claimed.

Quintanar returned to the bar in hopes that she would be safe inside the crowded venue, the suit claimed. But Khan persisted; he sat next to her, tried to whisper in her ear and followed her, according to the complaint.

The Adult Survivors Act took effect in New York on Nov. 24, opening a window for Quintanar to bring assault and battery claims because Khan's alleged sexual offenses occurred more than a year ago.

Quintanar was initially too afraid to report the incident because of Khan's power within state Democratic politics, the complaint said. She said she feared he could end her career in politics and government.

But over time, Quintanar learned that there may have been other victims, discovering that Khan had been accused of sexually assaulting a female co-worker in 2017 when he was chief of staff for James in her former role as public advocate, according to the complaint.

Quintanar also learned that Khan had been accused of sexually assaulting a female colleague at the AG's office, the complaint stated.

It has been suggested in many circles that James' office went to lengths to protect Khan while he was suspended in October, pending its investigation into the assaults.

Quintanar brought claims against James and her office and the campaign because the law required them to protect Quintanar from Khan's actions, and they were allegedly negligent in hiring, retaining and supervising Khan, according to the allegations.

In a joint statement, Wigdor partners Douglas Wigdor and Valdi Licul said: "This case is not about politics. It is about abuse of power, the absence of appropriate oversight, and the vindication of the rights of Ms. Quintanar. We will leave no stone unturned in our quest for justice and accountability."

"With the filing of this complaint," Quintanar said, "I hope to increase the visibility and strength of women of color having a voice in the #MeToo movement. We are less likely to come forward in these situations because those in positions of power have historically thought less of us. While I fear the effect that this might have on my career, I know that fear should never stand in the way of doing what is right. I hope I can give other survivors the courage to find their voice and hold those in positions of power responsible for their actions when

they demonstrate the belief that they are above the law.”

Last week, James’ office provided the press a sequence of events amid suggestions she covered up the allegations against Khan during her successful bid for reelection in November, when she defeated Queens attorney Michael Henry to be reelected as AG on Nov. 8.

James and her office became aware of the allegations against Khan, who is not a lawyer, on Oct. 2, five weeks prior to the election.

On Oct. 3, her office advised Khan that he should work remotely and refrain from socializing with staff or anyone in any capacity affiliated with the attorney general during the course of the investigation.

Within days, the office retained the firm Littler Mendelson to conduct a privileged review of the allegations, at an agreed-upon hourly partner rate of \$855, and an associate rate of \$477.

The firm appointed Terri Solomon, who worked with and directed other Littler lawyers and personnel as part of the investigation.

Khan tendered his resignation on Nov. 22.

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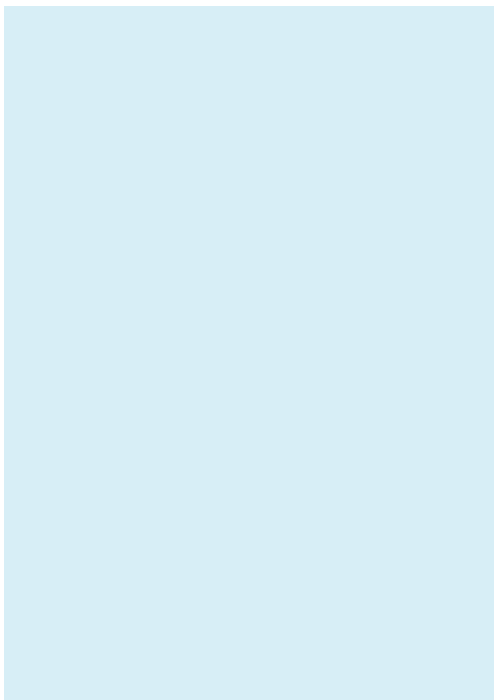


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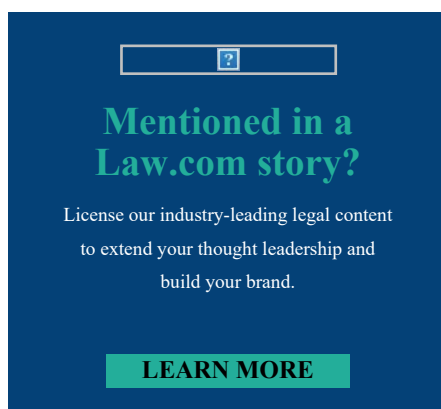
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
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