

## HARRIS CLEARED IN ACCUSATION OF SEX HARASSMENT

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The city's Ethics and Elections Commission has thrown out a sexual-harassment complaint against Seattle City Councilwoman Sherry Harris by a former aide.

Harris said she felt vindicated "because no one has stood against harassment and discrimination as I have both before and after taking office as a City Council member."

Carolyn Van Noy, the commission's executive director, informed the former employee yesterday that the commission found "no factual basis for your complaint" and the case was closed.

Harris, a first-term council member who has announced she will seek re-election, said she fired the aide last month for poor job performance.

The commission concurred.

The former aide, 29, a volunteer intern in her office, contended that Harris, a lesbian, had a personal attraction to her and blocked an opportunity for her to obtain a paid position elsewhere or as her legislative aide. She had been on the staff about three months.

"We found no evidence that council member Harris blocked an opportunity for you to obtain paid employment in 1994," Van Noy wrote. "In addition, we found substantial evidence that council member Harris discussed work-performance issues with you and terminated your employment based on work performance."

In a statement issued after rumors about the complaint began to circulate, Harris said that the aide had attempted to force her into reconsidering her decision to fire her for poor work performance.

Harris said the aide had threatened to file a discrimination suit, based on race and sex discrimination and a grievance for wrongful termination.

Harris said that after allowing the woman to join her staff, she learned that the aide earlier had filed a discrimination complaint against her former employer, the Seattle Municipal Court, which also had terminated her employment. According to a court source, that dismissal was upheld in administrative proceedings after an appeal.

