

Cuomo Apologizes for Behavior Around Women but Vows to Stay in Office

Besieged by sexual harassment allegations, a somber New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo apologized Wednesday, saying he “learned an important lesson” about his own behavior around women, but he said he intended to remain in office.

“I now understand that I acted in a way that made people feel uncomfortable,” Cuomo said at a Wednesday press conference. “It was unintentional and I truly and deeply apologize for it.”

Cuomo said he will “fully cooperate” with the state attorney general’s investigation into sexual harassment allegations. Attorney General Letitia James is in the process of selecting an outside law firm to conduct an investigation into the allegations and produce a report that will be made publicly.

Cuomo had avoided public appearances for days as some fellow Democrats call for him to resign. Before Wednesday’s press conference, the governor last spoke to reporters during a teleconference call on Feb. 22. His last media briefing on video was Feb. 19.

He hadn’t spoken publicly since giving New York Attorney General Letitia James a referral to investigate claims that he sexually harassed at least two women in his administration.

One former aide, Charlotte Bennett, 25, said Cuomo quizzed her about her sex life and asked whether she would be open to a relationship with an older man. Bennett rejected Cuomo’s attempted apology, in which he said he’d been trying to be “playful” and that his jokes had been misinterpreted as flirting.

Another former aide, Lindsey Boylan, said Cuomo commented on her appearance inappropriately, kissed her without her consent at the end of a meeting, and once suggested they play strip poker while aboard his state-owned jet. Cuomo has denied Boylan's allegations.

And another woman, Anna Ruch, told *The New York Times* that Cuomo put his hands on her face and asked if he could kiss her at a September 2019 wedding.

Cuomo started Wednesday's press conference focusing on the latest data on the coronavirus pandemic. {eo}

© 2021 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.