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DISTRICT 24



Arizona State Senate

SENATE MINORITY
LEADER

COMMITTEES:

RULES

APPROPRIATIONS

HEALTH AND HUMAN
SERVICES

January 25, 2018

President Steven Yarbrough
AZ State Senate
1700 W. Washington Street
Phoenix, AZ 82007

Dear President Yarbrough,

This letter is to express my concerns over incidents that occurred at the capitol today, and the response to them. People of differing opinions have a constitutional right to express themselves, but not in a way that impinges on other people's personal space and safety.

There were several Trump supporters outside today, in what appeared to be some sort of organized protest or demonstration. They were yelling loudly enough at some times that I could hear them in my office. Throughout the day, there have been several incidents with these protestors reported on social media, and reported to me personally and other members.

These protestors were yelling in a threatening way to anyone who they perceived to not be white, asking if they supported illegal immigration, calling them illegal immigrants, and telling them to leave, with visibly displayed weapons. This included capitol staff and visitors, including elementary school students and children even younger.

At one point, one of the protestors dropped their weapon in front of the senate building, scaring everyone in the vicinity.

I am concerned, to say the least, that at many times this yelling escalated to the level of harassment, or was perceived as harassment by those on the receiving end, and nothing was done by law enforcement to intervene. It has also been reported that when law enforcement did intervene, it was towards bystanders who were trying to protect students from this harassment, rather than the protestors.

I can tell you that the Democratic staff who were yelled at by the protestors and called illegals definitely felt harassed and were not satisfied with the response. They did not feel safe. What I was told by the officer that I approached was that they were instructed to stand down and that the protestors were exercising their first amendment rights.

Mr. President, I support the first amendment right to peacefully protest, but these people went far beyond that. They were harassing and they were implying threats by the display of their weapons.

This is a public place. When armed protestors aggressively go after members, staff, and visitors, there needs to be a response that ensures the safety of everyone involved.

I have seen many instances here at the capital when peaceful protestors with a different agenda were surrounded by many more law enforcement officers with a much more aggressive response.

This is unacceptable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'KH', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Katie Hobbs
Senate Minority Leader
Legislative District 24

cc: Wendy Baldo
Shane McFarland
Joe Kubacki