

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 13, 2021

Contact: Matt Garcia-Sierra, m.garciasierra@nmlegis.gov, 505-205-5486

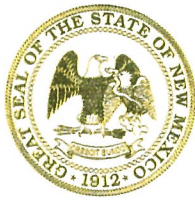
24 House Members call on Gov and NM AG to reject Biden plan to silence parents

Santa Fe, NM – The House Republican Caucus in the New Mexico Legislature today advocated to the Governor and NM Attorney General to respect and protect the rights of parents and other concerned citizens who wish to assemble peacefully and express their opinions at local school boards in the state. The letter follows recent [announcements by President Biden’s Attorney General](#) to direct the FBI and US Attorney’s Office to coordinate with local law enforcement to combat individuals protesting at local school board meetings.

The 24 members of the House Republican Caucus urge the Governor and NM Attorney General to join other states in not cooperating with federal agents who try to deny parents or community members their constitutional rights at a public meeting. They further clarify that House Republicans do not support or tolerate violence perpetrated against school officials, and will condemn any such behavior. The caucus also writes that law enforcement efforts, especially action by federal agents, should not be used for political purposes or to hinder the people’s right to freedom of speech, and the right to peacefully assemble.

The New Mexico Public Education Department’s [controversial Social Studies Standards](#) are up for public comment through November 12, 2021.

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State of New Mexico
House of Representatives
State Capitol
Santa Fe

October 13, 2021

The Honorable Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor, State of New Mexico
State Capitol, Room 400
490 Old Santa Fe Trail
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

The Honorable Hector Balderas
Attorney General, State of New Mexico
Villagra Building
408 Galisteo Street
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Dear Governor and Mr. Attorney General:

We are writing to request that your offices work together to protect the rights of parents and other concerned citizens who wish to assemble peacefully and express their opinions at local school board meetings across our state. The recent announcement by the U.S. Attorney General that the FBI and U.S. Attorney's offices will begin meeting with federal, state, and local law enforcement leaders within the next 30 days to "combat" harassment and threats against school officials is a major overreach of federal authority. Equally important, having federal agents potentially attending these local school board meetings will have a chilling effect on the willingness of parents and others to exercise their constitutional rights at future public forums regarding the education of their children.

Therefore, we strongly urge you to inform the New Mexico U.S. Attorney and FBI officials that the State of New Mexico will not cooperate with federal agents who try to deny parents and others their constitutional rights at a public meeting. Further, we encourage both of you to speak out publicly about how the State of New Mexico will reassure parents and other concerned residents that they should never hesitate to appear at a local school board meeting, a local government meeting, or a state legislative/administrative hearing in order to express their opinions about public policy questions.

Violence or the threat of violence is never acceptable as part of the public discourse on which our republic so greatly depends, and we are confident state and local law enforcement officials can properly handle any acts of harassment or threats against school personnel. However, the involvement of the FBI is clearly unnecessary and any effort by a politicized U.S. Department of Justice to define parents expressing their opposition to Critical Race Theory or mask mandates as "domestic terrorism" simply has no place in New Mexico.

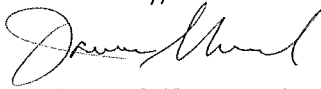
Parents and other concerned citizens have every right and responsibility to voice their wishes on how and what children are taught in our public schools. Yet, this imposition of the power of the federal government into clearly what is a state and local matter can only be interpreted as an attempt to intimidate law-abiding parents and residents from showing up at local school board meetings. The public debate and controversy surrounding efforts by some educators to encourage revisionist history and instill values and concepts that a vast majority of Americans find objectionable is no excuse to treat parents and others concerned residents as potential criminals.

In conclusion, we do not support or tolerate any acts violence perpetrated against school officials and we strongly condemn anyone who exhibits such behavior. However, law enforcement efforts, especially

action by federal agents, should never be conducted with a hint of political undertones or be a subtle attempt to deny people their freedom of speech or ability to assemble in a peaceful manner. We hope both of you will protect these fundamental rights and resist the temptation to put a political agenda above the rights of all New Mexicans.

We look forward to your response.

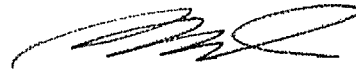
Sincerely,



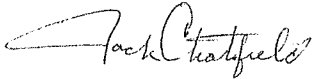
James G. Townsend
House Republican Leader



Rod Montoya
House Republican Whip



Rebecca Dow
Caucus Chair



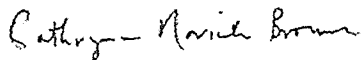
Jack Chatfield
State Representative HD 67



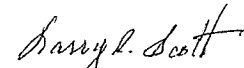
Alonzo Baldonado
State Representative HD 8



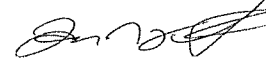
Gail Armstrong
State Representative HD 49



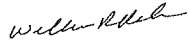
Cathrynn Brown
State Representative HD 55



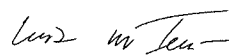
Larry Scott
State Representative HD 62



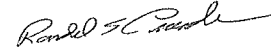
James Strickler
State Representative HD 2



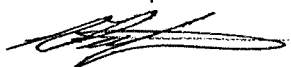
Bill Rehm
State Representatives HD 31



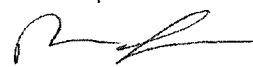
Luis Terrazas
State Representative HD 39



Randy Crowder
State Representative HD 64



Randy Pettigrew
State Representative HD 61



Ryan Lane
State Representative HD 3



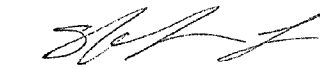
Martin Zamora
State Representative HD 63



Rachel Black
State Representative HD 51



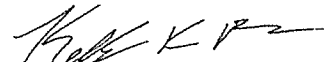
Candy Spence Ezzell
State Representative HD 58



Stefani Lord
State Representative HD 22



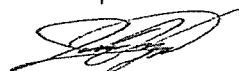
Jane Powdrell-Culbert
State Representative HD 44




Kelly Fajardo
State Representative HD 7



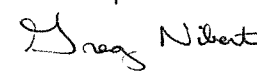
Josh Hernandez
State Representative HD 60



Jason Harper
State Representative HD 57



Zach Cook
State Representative HD 56



Greg Nibert
State Representative HD 59