



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATEMENT FROM REPRESENTATIVE MARK FINCHEM REGARDING NEW HOUSE SECURITY PROTOCOLS

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX (Thursday, April 7, 2016) – “Today the House of Representative implemented a simple security measure that has been misrepresented by the news media. Media representatives claimed that they were banned from the floor, Associated Press reporter Bob Christie asked me, “Are you scared of me for some reason? You’ve banned us from the House!””

“I start with a question, why does the media have the opinion that they are somehow exempt from the Rule of the House? The facts are these:”

“A letter was signed by more than 20 members and given to the Speaker, requesting more security in the House. **NON-STAFF badge holders** have been asked to agree to a cursory background check. This is voluntary and only looks for violent offenses. This includes vendors, the media, interns, Doctor of the Day, and even our Chaplain.”

“If badge holders chose not to do the security check, they are not banned from the House of Representatives, they are welcome in all public areas. The press has access to the gallery or the online proceedings if they choose not to do the check. We do not ask for Social Security Number or medical information. We only ask for name, date of birth and driver’s license number. This tightening of House security is action that is long overdue.”

“We care not if someone has unpaid parking tickets or even a DUI. The policy is designed to look for violent criminal history. Security/DPS is conducting the background checks and the Speaker will not get the results unless there is something violent. This is about implementing new protocols and moving forward, not about targeting anyone. This is an expectation of all NON-STAFF badge holders, NOT JUST THE MEDIA.”

“Many other states have similar, if not identical kinds of protocols. Members of the House who refuse to acknowledge the realities of the evolving security environment that we live in put us all in peril.”

“Members of the Democrat caucus attempted to make this policy about gun control, children dying from careless gun owners and even the barring of media from the chamber. The truth remains that the media has not been banned from witnessing the business of the Peoples House. Rep. Charlene Fernandez spoke into the record, “Just because we are elected does not make us responsible citizens”. I could not agree more.”

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