



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

Representative Mark Finchem (R-11)

1700 West Washington • Phoenix, Arizona • 85007-2844

Friday, July 19, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Representative Finchem Calls on Attorney General to Investigate Superintendent Hoffman's Administration of ESA Program

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – Representative Mark Finchem (R-11) today called on the Arizona Attorney General to investigate Superintendent of Public Instruction Kathy Hoffman's administration of the Empowerment Scholarship Account (ESA) program after a video circulated by American Federation for Children uncovered dozens of families not receiving responses to ESA applications after waiting months.

"It appears that Superintendent Hoffman is letting her personal disapproval of the ESA program affect her legal obligation to follow the law," said Representative Mark Finchem. **"It is unconscionable that an elected official charged with administering education programs would slow-walk a program, which primarily serves children with special needs, because it doesn't fit her left-wing agenda to end parental authority over school choice. Personal politics should never supersede the law, particularly as it relates to disadvantaged and needy families."**

"As we've seen recently, the superintendent somehow found the time, money, and staff to wrongly persecute Native American families, stepparents, and military families in the ESA program when she and her staff's time clearly could be better spent actually helping families as she is statutorily defined to do."

In 2011, Arizona was the first state to enact the ESA program, which allowed children with certain disabilities, children living on Indian reservations, children in foster care, and children of active duty military personnel to have new learning opportunities. The ESA program is administered by the Arizona Department of Education and is required by law to process ESA Applications within 45 days.

"I have asked the Arizona Attorney General to take necessary action to compel Hoffman to comply with Arizona law and also investigate if she is personally liable for a failure-to-act in accordance with the 45-day rule."

###

CONTACT:

Matthew Specht

Director of Communications

House Republican Caucus

602-926-5518

mspecht@azleg.gov