



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

Representative John Gillette (R-30)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ICE Detainer Exposes System Failure After Sexual Assault of Elementary Student

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – An ICE detainer issued in Phoenix following the sexual assault of a 10-year-old student at Orangewood Elementary School exposes a serious breakdown in public safety protections and a failure to stop a known offender before a child was harmed.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has identified Abel Kai Gblah, a criminal alien from Liberia and a registered sex offender, in connection with the assault. This was not an unknown threat. This was a documented sex offender who should never have had access to a school community.

“This case is a clear and unacceptable failure,” said Representative John Gillette. **“A registered sex offender should never have been free to assault a child in an Arizona school. When local systems fail to stop dangerous offenders, ICE steps in—that is exactly why federal enforcement exists. Any policy or practice that delays or undermines a lawful detainer puts children at risk.”**

ICE’s action is now necessary to prevent further harm and ensure removal under federal law—but it comes only after a child was victimized.

There is no excuse, no gray area, and no room for obstruction,” Representative Gillette added. **“Public safety is not negotiable, and cooperation with ICE in cases involving violent crime and sexual offenses against minors must be immediate and absolute. ICE officers continue to carry out lawful enforcement actions under political pressure to locate dangerous offenders and protect the public. Arizona families expect local and county officials to fully cooperate with those efforts. Public safety comes first. Children come first.”**

John Gillette is a Republican member of the Arizona House of Representatives serving Legislative District 30 in Mohave County. He is Chairman of the Federalism, Military Affairs & Elections Committee. Follow him on X at @AzRepGillette.

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