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**Advocates Call for Sanction of Bernalillo County Representative
after Racist Behavior During Hearings**

Rep. Stefani Lord Used Racist Language, Behaviors to Silence Public

Leaders with the New Mexico Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs are calling for Rep. Stefani Lord (R-Bernalillo) to be held accountable after they say she created a hostile, racially charged environment in multiple House committee hearings last week by using tactics designed to silence people of color--including using coded racist language, behaving aggressively toward BIPOC members of the public, and even calling law enforcement when she disagreed with testimony provided by a Black woman.

“We believe that Rep. Lord should be held accountable for ethics violations and her disturbing comments, which were designed to discredit, disempower and outright disparage BIPOC New Mexicans using the legislative process to improve the lives of survivors of sexual violence,” said Kim Alaburda, executive director of NMCSAP.

NMCSAP deputy director, Alexandria Taylor, who is Black, bore the brunt of Lord’s behavior at the hearing, [video of which is available online](#). (Timestamp: 6:18 for testimony. 6:28 begins Lord on the phone with law enforcement.)

“I am still processing and trying to understand the fullness of what happened,” Taylor said. “Rep. Lord’s behavior was unacceptable. We talk about institutionalized racism in our state government and here it is in real time in our legislative process.”

During last Tuesday’s hearing, members considered HB 156, Sex Crimes by Peace Officers, a bill to protect against abuse of power by holding accountable any law enforcement officer who commits sexual violence against a witness, suspect or detainee in their custody.

“HB 156 helps law enforcement by standing up to any bad cops who abuse public trust,” Alaburda said. “This legislation is pro-law enforcement, anti-sexual violence and anti-abuse of power.”

However, Lord became enraged during Taylor's testimony on the bill. Lord aggressively questioned Taylor's integrity and knowledge of the subject matter before accusing Taylor of being "anti-police." At one point, reminiscent of the woman in Central Park who called the cops on a Black man birdwatching, Lord held a phone to her ear and told Taylor that she was on the phone with law enforcement and effectively telling them that Taylor was spreading misinformation and impugning police officers.

"Saying you're on the phone with law enforcement (calling the cops) to a Black woman is threatening and was meant to intimidate me," Taylor said. "At the New Mexico Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs, we fight every day for survivors of sexual violence to have access to justice, accountability, and healing. I won't stand for violence from our elected officials in that process."

White women needlessly calling law enforcement over the perceived misbehavior of a person of color is a devastating practice that has been--and continues to be--used as a way to oppress and terrify people of color, said Jennifer Gardner, a New Mexico social justice advocate.

"For Rep. Lord to weaponize this moment by calling the cops when she didn't like what a Black woman was saying is at the very least tone deaf to the point the bill and the nationwide movement to stop the threat of police brutality as a tool of silencing people of color," Gardner said. "At worst it is an overtly racist act intended to keep people of color 'in their place.' Either way, it is unacceptable and cannot be tolerated--especially from a public official."

In a House Health and Human Services Committee hearing on Friday, during consideration of HB 142, Affirmative Consent Education, Lord lashed out again. This time she disparaged and maligned Andrew Echols, an LGBTQ man of color, who shared his story of mistreatment by campus police. [Video of this outburst is also available online.](#) (Timestamp: 11:23)

"Rep. Lord has demonstrated a pattern of hostility and disrespect toward people of color who appear before her at legislative hearings," Alburda said. "We demand House leadership call out and condemn this behavior in order to uphold the integrity of the Legislative process."

Others who participated in the hearings were equally outraged.

"We rely on our legislators to serve the people in ways that reflect their moral obligation, commitment, and self-accountability for establishing racial equity and justice. This is a historic opportunity," said Maria Jose Rodriguez Cadiz, executive director of Solace in Santa Fe. "Rep. Lord has failed her constituents and the people of New Mexico by upholding systems of privilege and exclusion."

Advocates are currently pursuing formal options for filing complaints against Lord.

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