

BECKY A. NUTT
1700 WEST WASHINGTON, SUITE H
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007-2844
CAPITOL PHONE: (602) 926-4852
TOLL FREE: 1-800-352-8404
bnutt@azleg.gov



COMMITTEES:
RULES,
Chairman
APPROPRIATIONS
COMMERCE

DISTRICT 14

Arizona House of Representatives Phoenix, Arizona 85007

February 12, 2021

Representative Domingo DeGrazia
Representative Alma Hernandez
Representative Jacqueline Parker
Representative Frank Pratt
Members of the Ethics Committee
Arizona House of Representatives
1700 W. Washington Street
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Re: Ethics Complaints: Representative Mark Finchem; Representative Bret Roberts;
Representative David Cook; Representative Walt Blackman

Dear Members of the Committee:

In the last four weeks, I have received 82 complaints regarding Representative Mark Finchem's alleged role in the January 6, 2021 assault on the United States Capitol. For the reasons below, I will not be taking any action on these complaints at this time.

On January 13, Representative César Chávez submitted a notarized complaint against Representative Finchem for allegedly "violating his oath of office and supporting the violent attempt to stop members of Congress from certifying the electoral college vote." "Based on his personal knowledge of news articles and social media posts," Representative Chávez asserted that Representative Finchem (1) "tweeted a picture on January 6, 2021 at the United States Capitol," (2) "was there and encourag[ed]" those who overran the Capitol on that day, and (3) "was . . . scheduled to speak at [a] rally." Representative Chávez contended that "[s]uch behavior makes [Representative Finchem] unfit for office," and urged the "ethics committee [to] recommend immediate expulsion" if it finds that Representative Finchem "supported the violent overthrow of our government."

In the weeks that followed, I received 81 additional complaints regarding Representative Finchem. Most were notarized, but the vast majority appeared to be form letters. More to the point, none of the complaints offered any facts establishing that Representative Finchem actually "supported the violent overthrow of our government" or directly participated in the January 6th attack on the United States Capitol. Absent such facts, the complaints amount to an objection to Representative Finchem's advocacy of controversial political opinions. But the ethics committee is not—and cannot become—a forum for resolving political disagreements, no matter how important the issues at stake.

Finally, the notarized complaint submitted by Susan K. Ritz, "an LD11 voter," not only picks a series of political bones with Representative Finchem, it also includes complaints against Representatives Bret Roberts, David Cook, and Walter Blackman. The complaint alleges that Representative Roberts "participat[ed] in a misinformation/disinformation campaign designed to

Representative Domingo DeGrazia
Representative Alma Hernandez
Representative Jessica Parker
Representative Frank Pratt
February 12, 2021
Page 2



disenfranchise LD11 voters by casting doubt on our election systems without evidence.” Even if this were true, it too would amount to controversial political advocacy, which falls outside this committee’s purview.

Ms. Ritz’s complaint also requests that the committee investigate Representatives David Cook and Walter Blackman, who allegedly “were present at the 1/6/21 rally.” Representative Cook responded to me in writing on February 2, 2021; Representative Blackman did so on February 4th. Both indicated that they were not in Washington, D.C. on January 6th. And while Representative Blackman stated that he “was a guest speaker at a pray[er] assembly” at the Arizona State Capitol on that date, he denied even “refer[ring] to the events in Washington, D.C.” during his speech, much less “encourag[ing] anyone to participate in that terrible act.”

I therefore conclude that none of these complaints warrants any action at this time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Becky Nutt".

Becky Nutt
Chairman
House Ethics Committee

Enclosure:

cc:

Speaker Russell W. "Rusty" Bowers
Representative Mark Finchem
Jim Drake, Chief Clerk