

State of Nebraska

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

2023-2024
EXECUTIVE BOARD
RAY AGUILAR, CHAIRPERSON
JOHN LOWE, VICE CHAIRPERSON
JOHN ARCH
BEAU BALLARD
ELIOT BOSTAR
MIKE JACOBSON
MERV RIEPE
JULIE SLAMA
TONY VARGAS
ROBERT CLEMENTS (ex officio)



BRANDON METZLER
Clerk of the Legislature
BENJAMIN THOMPSON
Director of Research
STEPHANIE MEESE
Legislative Auditor
MARCIA MCCLURG
Revisor of Statutes
KEISHA PATENT
Legislative Fiscal Analyst
JULIE L. ROGERS
Ombudsman

PO Box 94604
State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509-4604
www.nebraskalegislature.gov

During the evening debate of LB 441 on March 18, 2024, Senator Steve Halloran read from a committee transcript, which in turn was quoting a book that recounted an explicit act of sexual violence. During this floor speech, the names of members of the Legislature were interjected in the passage being read.

On the morning of Wednesday, March 20, 2024, the Chair of the Executive Board of the Nebraska Legislative Council announced that he had launched an investigation under the Legislature's workforce harassment policy into the conduct of Senator Halloran. A Special Personnel Panel was appointed by Chairman Aguilar, and the Panel retained outside counsel to conduct the formal investigation. In particular, the Panel requested an investigation into whether Senator Steve Halloran's conduct on March 18, 2024 during floor debate violated the Nebraska Legislature's Workplace Harassment Policy and/or constituted sex discrimination, and what options the Legislature may have to address any violations of improper conduct.

During the investigation, outside counsel found that "Senator Halloran's conduct and comments give rise to a violation of the Legislature's Workplace Harassment Policy." This finding was "irrespective of Senator Halloran's post facto explanation to the media that he was referencing Senator John Cavanaugh, not Senator Machaela Cavanaugh, to get his attention".

In summarizing the findings in the Investigative Report, the outside counsel found that while "Senator Halloran engaged in protected activity under the First Amendment" there are internal "remedial actions" the Nebraska Legislature may utilize. In discussing these actions, outside counsel noted that:

Given that Senator Halloran's conduct gives rise to violations of the Legislature's Workplace Harassment Policy, we find the Special Personnel Panel, Executive Board, and Legislature may, in their discretion, censure or reprimand Senator Halloran for his conduct and comments on March 18, 2024.

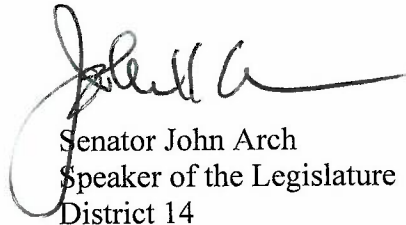
Having witnessed the actions of Senator Halloran, in conjunction with the findings of the Investigative Report, the undersigned members of the Executive Board formally deplore the "unacceptable conduct" of Senator Halloran and find that his remarks were not only unbecoming

of a member of the Nebraska Legislature and contrary to all senatorial traditions of decorum, but clearly violated the Nebraska Legislature's Workplace Harassment Policy.

It is hereby declared that the undersigned condemn the conduct of Senator Halloran, when he interjected the names of fellow members of the Legislature in a sexually explicit passage. This letter of reprimand shall stand in the permanent record as intent of this Executive Board of the 108th Legislature that conduct and comments such as those by Senator Halloran should never be tolerated, and that the Nebraska Legislature should seek to foster a future work environment that respects the dignity of all members of the Legislature and restores the confidence of the people of the state in the Legislature.



Senator Ray Aguilar
Chairperson, Executive Board
District 35



Senator John Arch
Speaker of the Legislature
District 14



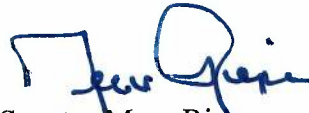
Senator Beau Ballard
District 21



Senator Eliot Bostar
District 29



Senator Mike Jacobson
District 42



Senator Merv Riepe
District 12



Senator Julie Slama
District 1



Senator Tony Vargas
District 7