



COUNTY LEGISLATURE JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI

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Statement from Legislator Manny Abarca- Response to Frank White's Investigation

(Kansas City, MO) - I am disappointed but not surprised by the recent leak of the so-called "investigation" initiated under County Executive Frank White's administration. This is part of a continuing pattern of political maneuvering by Mr. White and his Chief of Staff, Caleb Clifford, who routinely attempt to distract the public from the real issues facing Jackson County.

I fully participated in this unsubstantiated and unfounded "hostile work environment" inquiry. Throughout my career, I have undergone numerous trainings, and I remain committed to treating colleagues, staff, and constituents with respect. In return, I expect that same respect for the Legislature, including from the County Executive and his staff.

It is not beyond me to reflect that only two legislators are currently being "investigated" by the County Executive, both of whom have been outspoken critics of his administration and strong supporters of the recall effort. At no other time in the history of the Legislature has the Executive attempted such a blatant power grab to retaliate against his political opponents.

This investigation was launched without proper authority, budget approval, or policy justification. County General Counsel previously advised that only the Legislature, not the Executive, has the authority to investigate its own members. Yet Mr. White chose to hand-select a law firm and move forward anyway, costing taxpayers \$25,000 in an unauthorized, non-competitive contract. This misuse of taxpayer dollars is both irresponsible and an abuse of process.

Despite these tactics, I remain steadfast in my commitment to Jackson County residents. I will not be bullied into silence by intimidation or retaliation. I will continue to shine a light on mismanagement, challenge poor decision-making, and fight for accountability at every level of county government.

Finally, I am attaching a letter of support organized without my knowledge by my Legislative Aide, Monica Bravo, and signed by many of the women I work with daily in the Legislative, Auditor, and Clerk's offices. Their voices and firsthand experiences highlight the politically motivated nature of this process and the flaws in how it was conducted.

This misuse of an investigative process designed for real victims of workplace misconduct is appalling. Jackson County taxpayers deserve better than political games and wasteful distractions. My focus will remain on solving the real problems facing our community, not indulging in the desperate tactics of a failing administration.

Your Representative in the Jackson County Legislature

Manny Abarca IV