

October 2, 2025

The Honorable Speaker Steve Montenegro
1700 West Washington Street
Suite H, Room 205
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Speaker Montenegro,

On behalf of the 30 undersigned organizations, **we urge you to take action against State Representative John Gillette** in light of his social media post calling for violence against United States Representative Pramila Jayapal.

In response to a video of Representative Jayapal discussing the need for non-violent protest, Representative Gillette stated that she should be “tried convicted and hanged”.¹ In Representative Jayapal’s video, there are no calls for violence, and no advocacy for overthrowing the government in either the clip shared to social media or the full video, available on YouTube.²

Representative Jayapal’s remarks are sharply contrasted with Representative Gillette’s, which are actively inciting violence against a sitting member of Congress. This call for execution is deeply concerning in light of the recent assassination of Minnesota Speaker of the House Melissa Hortman and her husband, the shooting of Minnesota state Senator John Hoffman and his wife, the murder of Charlie Kirk, and the arson attack on Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro’s home.

This threat from Representative Gillette is particularly troubling in light of data showing that women, people of color, and women of color who serve in elected offices face a disproportionate amount of threats and abuse.³ And these elected officials, particularly women of color, face more than just threats. In 2022, a man armed with a semiautomatic

¹ @AZRepGillette “Until people like this, that advocate for the overthrow of the American government are tried convicted and hanged.. it will continue.” Twitter, 25 Sep. 2025, 4:11 a.m., <https://xcancel.com/AzRepGillette/status/1971064885296628139>; Jerod MacDonald-Evoy, *GOP lawmaker calls for Dem congresswoman to be executed for urging Trump protests*, AZ Mirror, 25 Sep. 2025, 5:05 p.m. <https://azmirror.com/2025/09/25/john-gillette-gop-lawmaker-calls-for-democratic-congresswoman-to-be-executed-for-urging-trump-protests/>.

² J “The Resistance Lab” *YouTube* uploaded by Pramila for Congress, 30 Mar. 2025, https://www.youtube.com/live/_xMpZmLwdHw?t=615s.

³ Ruby Edlin, *Political Intimidation Threatens Diversity in State and Local Office*, Brennan Center for Justice, 18 Mar. 2024 <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/political-intimidation-threatens-diversity-state-and-local-office>.

handgun showed up at Representative Jayapal's house.⁴ To incite violence against Representative Jayapal, who has already faced deadly threats and intimidation, is unconscionable.

Our country is strong because the First Amendment protects people's right to peaceably assemble, and people are able to advocate for their views without fearing for their lives. It's why our First Amendment protects freedom of speech, but does not protect speech that incites lawless action or violence.⁵

This remark follows a disturbing pattern of violent and inflammatory rhetoric by Representative Gillette. Just a few weeks ago, Representative Gillette made a series of Islamophobic posts on social media.⁶ And as a sheriff's deputy, Representative Gillette received 42 internal-affairs complaints about his conduct, which amounts to more complaints than the entire department received in 2005, 2006, and 2007.⁷ Representative Gillette's comments about Representative Jayapal are not an isolated incident, and they should be taken seriously as the threat and incitement of violence that they are.

Representative Gillette's comments were disorderly behavior of the highest order, reflect a broader pattern of inciting political violence that put lives at risk, and should not be tolerated by Arizona House leadership.⁸ We urge you to take action against Representative Gillette's incitement of violence against another elected official, to demonstrate to the people of Arizona that they are free to non-violently protest and engage with their state legislature without fear for their lives.

Sincerely,

Reproductive Freedom for All Arizona
ADRC Action
American Association of University Women Arizona
Arizona Center for Women's Advancement
Arizona Education Association
Arizona List
Arizona Poor People's Campaign

⁴ Stephanie Lai, Luke Broadwater and Carl Hulse, *Lawmakers Confront a rise in Threats and Intimidation, and Fear Worse*, The New York Times, 1 Oct. 2022

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/01/us/politics/violent-threats-lawmakers.html>.

⁵ See e.g. *Brandenburg v. Ohio*, 395 U.S. 444 (1969).

⁶ Jerod MacDonald-Evoy, *Arizona GOP lawmaker calls muslims 'f***ing savages' and 'terrorists' from 'sh*t hole' countries*, AZ Mirror, 9 Sep. 2025, 8:39 a.m.

<https://azmirror.com/2025/09/09/john-gillette-arizona-gop-lawmaker-calls-muslims-fing-savages-and-terrorists/>.

⁷ Bruce Rushton, *Was Gillette a rouge deputy or a good cop?*, The State Journal-Register, 3 Nov. 2009, 2:05 a.m. <https://www.sj-r.com/story/news/2009/11/04/was-gillette-rogue-deputy-good/42932946007/>.

⁸ See e.g. Rule 1.A, *Rules of the Arizona House of Representatives*, 57th Leg., Reg. Sess. (Ariz. 2025) https://www.azhouse.gov/alispdfs/AdoptedRulesofthe57thLegislature_ConformingChanges.pdf.

Arizona Students' Association
AZ AANHPI
Chispa Arizona
Civic Engagement Beyond Voting
Council on American-Islamic Relations - Arizona Chapter
Family Planning Associates Medical Group
FLORECER: Reproductive Justice (*formerly Pro-Choice Arizona*)
Fuerte Arts Movement
Human Rights Campaign
League of Women Voters AZ
Living United for Change Arizona
Mi Familia Vota
National Council of Jewish Women Arizona
Our Voice Our Vote Arizona
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Arizona
Poder Latinx
Progress Arizona
Protect Democracy
Rural Arizona Action
Secular AZ
Sierra Club - Grand Canyon Chapter
Vets Forward
Working Families Party

cc: House Republican Leader Michael Carbone
House Democratic Leader Oscar De Los Santos