



May 3, 2019

House Democratic Caucus
Washington State House of Representatives
Legislative Building
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear House Democratic Caucus:

This is a response to your letter of today.

The House Republican Caucus stands united with you in embracing diversity and condemning hate, intolerance and violence of any kind. As I previously stated, "Threats of political violence have no place in our society and I condemn them in the strongest terms."

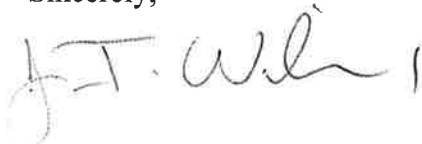
When allegations about Representative Matt Shea were brought forward, I directed our Leadership team to develop an investigation protocol and publicly announced that we would begin an investigation shortly after the session. On Tuesday, we completed a proposed process, which we planned to begin this week or early next week. This was interrupted on Wednesday, when the Speaker of the House instead proposed to have members of the Executive Rules Committee authorize the Chief Clerk to contract with an outside investigator. Before this review has even begun, we received your letter this afternoon, demanding imposition of immediate and permanent sanctions against Representative Shea.

The House Democratic Caucus is demanding immediate action now, purporting to know exactly what Representative Shea has said and done, and what is in his heart and mind. At this juncture, imposing summary action prior to investigation does not appear necessary, as session has concluded and committees are not presently meeting. And, while the allegations are serious and merit serious review, they must be reviewed consistent with our traditional notions of fundamental fairness and due process, which are among the "very ideals of our democracy and One Washington" we all revere. In our system of justice, we do not take action by impugning or assigning motives; we take action based on evidence, developed through a fair process.

Further, the House Democratic Caucus is demanding action it has not traditionally imposed on its own members in light of allegations of serious misconduct. Investigations have traditionally taken months, been shrouded in confidentiality, and permanent sanctions appear not to have been imposed prior to completion.

Finally, we are dismayed that this matter has been politicized and appears to be clearly coordinated with the Washington State Democratic Party, as is evident from the party's social media campaign beginning days ago, matching the sentiments and demands in your letter and the seemingly scripted calls and e-mails being sent to our office. As you note, as we note, as the media has noted, the allegations are serious. They may have a lasting and significant impact on Representative Shea and this institution. And they must be reviewed in a serious, fair and non-politicized manner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J.T. Wilcox", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rep. JT Wilcox
House Republican Leader