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For IMMEDIATE Release

BPRC Responds to State Sen. Sampson Hateful Post, Comments on Social Media

Fearmongering, rhetoric aimed at Sen. Winfield deserves apology

The **Black and Puerto Rican Caucus (BPRC)** condemns the threatening and misaligned comments directed at our colleague and fellow BPRC member, State Senator Gary Winfield (D-New Haven), that appeared following a recent post by State Senator Rob Sampson (R-Cheshire, Prospect, Southington, Waterbury, Wolcott) on Sen. Sampson's official state Facebook page.

Sen. Sampson, a staunch opponent of the recent police accountability law, posted a recent news article on Sen. Winfield and the Judiciary committee's priorities for the 2021 Legislative Session. The law, which was passed in the July 2020 Special Session and co-authored by Sen. Winfield, increases accountability of our law enforcement officers, including banning choke holds, preventing officers dismissed for misconduct from being rehired in another town, and holding officers accountable for malicious, willful, or wanton misconduct. In the post, Sen. Sampson wrote in part "Democrats serving on the legislature's Judiciary committee. . . are already telegraphing that they have zero interest in reversing any of the dangerous public policy . . . I will be proposing legislation to reverse many of the bad laws that have been enacted over the last decade, culminating with the so-called 'police accountability bill' from last year." Sen. Sampson stated he was counting on his community to create "pressure to **force** the majority party to have this conversation **whether they want to or not.**"

In a comment, "Greg Tubby" wrote "or we can take justice in our own hands. Hopefully the sanitation department will pick up the carcass."

These incendiary, fear-mongering, and dangerous comments cannot be tolerated at a time like this, when the entire country is on edge following last week's events at the U.S. Capitol.

"I'm very concerned for all members in the State Legislative process. We all need to understand that our words matter," said **State Representative and BPRC Chairman Geraldo Reyes** (D-Waterbury). "I'm not going to stand idle or have any member threatened as we work diligently to conduct the people's business."

“We cannot stand by and allow those who are of ill will attack the foundation of our democracy. Threats will not be ignored. An attack on one of us is an attack on all of us!” said **State Representative and BPRC Vice Chairman Bobby Gibson** (D-Bloomfield/Windsor). “A violent attempt to overthrow the government took place in large part because of alarming comments and hateful rhetoric. Elected officials should know their words matter.”

The BPRC is calling on Sen. Sampson to publicly apologize to Sen. Winfield for the post that led to the threatening comments that are now under investigation by state capitol police.

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing" –

Edmund Burke

Statement from members of the BPRC

Representative Geraldo Reyes, Chairman

Representative Bobby Gibson, Vice Chairman

Representative Matt Ritter, House Speaker

Representative Jason Rojas, House Majority Leader

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