



# Florida House of Representatives

*Representative Cindy Polo*

District 103

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Speaker Oliva,

While our state and nation once again feel the anger and pain from racial inequality and police brutality, many members of our communities are standing on the frontlines to have their voices heard. As we mourn the loss of George Floyd and countless others who died or were harmed at the hands of law enforcement, we see the planning, organizing, and mobilizing among our citizens and local advocacy groups, many of whom our colleagues support. During this time of great suffering, we also see the many social media posts that show solidarity and respect for this crucial movement.

On the evening of May 30th, I witnessed a very disturbing tweet by one of our own in the Florida House, Representative Anthony Sabatini. He used his social media platform to threaten "potential protestors" who are "coming near Lake County, FL," by posting a photo of his weapon, an assault rifle, and typing "this will be a very common sign upon illegal entry at any Lake County business--FYI!"

This kind of dangerous language and behavior should not be tolerated. It threatens the safety of U.S. citizens who are exercising their constitutionally protected rights of assembly and speech to highlight the everyday injustices that the black community faces. Inciting violence is abhorrent, and those who encourage it should be held accountable for their irresponsible actions. Although we may do and say things as a state representative that are not popular, we should always work for the good of the people and never make threats to harm others. It is my belief that as an elected official, harmful and threatening actions like these should have consequences. It is in the best interest of the state that this situation be taken seriously, as the safety of all Floridians is and should be our top priority.

I quote from the Rules of the Florida House of Representatives:

15.1 "Legislative office is a trust to be performed with integrity in the public interest. A member is respectful of the confidence placed in the member by the other members and by the people. By personal example and by admonition to colleagues whose behavior may threaten the honor of the lawmaking body, the member shall watchfully guard the responsibility of office and the responsibilities and duties placed on the member by the House. To this end, each member shall be accountable to the House for violations..."

15.2 "A member shall respect and comply with the law and shall perform at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and independence of the House and of the Legislature. Each member shall perform at all times in a manner that promotes a professional environment in the House..."

Representative Sabatini's comments are clearly inflammatory to an already volatile situation, and damaging to the integrity of the Florida House of Representatives. His behavior is contrary to good order and discipline. It is our responsibility, as written out in our own rules, to admonish him and insist he behave responsibly and with integrity.

I look forward to your response.

Always in Service,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cindy Polo".

Representative Cindy Polo