

Statement from the Office of Speaker Glen Casada

SEPARATING FACT FROM FICTION

In recent days, we have seen numerous false and misleading allegations and reports in the media and online related to actions taken by Speaker Glen Casada and this office. We think the public deserves to know the facts. As part of our action plan to bring greater clarity and transparency to the coverage of these issues, we have prepared this summary of some of the most outrageous and unsubstantiated charges and allegations.

True As Reported:

There were a small number of inappropriate text threads privately shared between then Tennessee House Caucus Chairman Casada, the House GOP press secretary Cade Cothren, and a disgruntled former employee in 2016.

FACT:

Speaker Casada has taken full responsibility for his inappropriate texting in 2016, and he has publicly and repeatedly apologized for his mistake:

"I deeply regret and am truly sorry for these text messages sent three years ago at a challenging time in my personal life. While I do not remember sending them, I take complete responsibility for them, and apologize to me friends, colleagues and constituents and hope they will find a way to forgive me. These three-year-old texts do not represent who I am today nor how I have conducted myself as Speaker."

Falsely Reported:

Repeated reports and innuendo that as Speaker, Casada was aware of or condoned several other outrageous and inappropriate text messages shared by Cade Cothren, then House GOP press secretary in 2015 or 2016, with other unknown or unnamed parties.

FACT:

These claims are completely false. Speaker Casada was not aware of and was not involved with these other text messages from 2015 or 2016 – nor had he ever been told about the existence of these additional text messages until he was informed by his former chief of staff following a reporter’s inquiry at the end of this legislative session.

Upon learning of and seeing the additional text messages that Mr. Cothren sent to the former disgruntled employee in 2016, Speaker Casada took appropriate action and requested the resignation of his chief of staff on May 6, 2019.

Speaker Casada has repeatedly and publicly condemned these messages saying:

“I condemn them in their entirety, and I do not tolerate that type of behavior as an elected official or as a human being.”

Falsely Reported:

Repeated references to manipulation of emails to frame Mr. Justin Jones with the Davison County District Attorney

FACT:

These claims are completely false. The independent special prosecutor will soon confirm there was no email manipulation - and Speaker Casada’s former chief of staff handled this matter appropriately – resulting in no additional penalties or consequences for Mr. Jones.

Confusion arose from Mr. Jones email being temporarily delayed by the legislature’s email security system and spam filters. Once this delay in delivery was discovered and identified by the Office of Legislative Information Services, this news was promptly shared by the former chief of staff with the Office of the District Attorney to prevent any negative action against Mr. Jones. We also provided this information to WTVF after their original story aired.

Falsely Reported:

Repeated references to the installation of secret listening devices inside the Cordell Hull building.

FACT:

These claims are completely false. There are no secret listening devices. The only system Speaker Casada and his staff have access to is the exact same legislative committee room monitoring system used by the Clerk of the House, the Speaker of the Senate, the Clerk of the Senate, and the audio/visual team of the Tennessee General Assembly.

Falsely Reported:

Repeated references to the installation of white noise devices in the Speaker’s office to prevent recordings or other nefarious reasons.

FACT:

These claims report are completely false. A white noise system, similar to those used by other state government agencies, the court system, and also in the private sector, was installed simply to cut down on the level of noise bleeding through multiple offices in the Speaker’s suite and was installed to minimize distraction, increase productivity, and to provide an appropriate level of office and staff privacy.