



Mike Carter
State Representative
29th District
Part of Hamilton County

Suite 632 Cordell Hull Building
Nashville, TN 37243

(615) 741-3025
Fax (615) 253-0241

House Of Representatives State of Tennessee

Member Of Committees
Judiciary Committee
Local Committee
Ethics Committee

Subcommittees
Chair-Civil Justice
Elections & Campaign Finance

rep.mike.carter@capitol.tn.gov

May 17, 2019

Republican Caucus for the House of Representatives, State of Tennessee

Re: Statement and Addendum

Dear Caucus Members:

In my prior statement I felt that no decision be made on the future of Glen Casada until all the facts were known and the investigation was completed. The facts are not fully known and my understanding is the investigation is in its infancy. However, with great reluctance and a heavy heart, I now feel moved to call for the resignation of Speaker Casada based on the facts that I now know.

On Friday May 10th I received a letter asking me to attend a meeting in Nashville wherein members of the Ethics Committee would be interviewed separately and individually prior to a regular meeting.

Upon my arrival of the 9th floor of the Cordell Hull building, Legislative Legal Services Offices, I was met by journalists and cameras together with four Democrats and myself. I waited until my name was called for my private interview.

I was given a statement of facts setting forth the Speaker's position on many of the issues that have been raised. During my 6 years on the Ethics Committee, I have never received a request for an advisory opinion from a legislator concerning his own conduct. Nevertheless, I agreed to participate as long as the opinion rendered was based upon facts that would withstand scrutiny.

After reviewing the facts as presented I advised that the facts did not appear to be in line with the documents existing in the public realm. At the immediate conclusion of my review of the statement of facts I was handed a 2 or 3 page advisory opinion, bearing signature lines [for] all 10 [Ethics Committee] members, which based upon the facts presented, found no ethical violations.

I was stunned that facts had been produced with an exonerating advisory opinion written for which no ethics committee member had input.

I was not allowed to leave with any documents from the meeting. I inquired as to the author of the opinion and was advised legal counsel for the committee had written the opinion. I immediately advised those present that I would not be signing the advisory opinion. I did however agree to sign the advisory opinion and adopt it as my own if the Speaker would state under oath that the facts stated were true and correct. I was advised that would not happen.

I was further advised that the opinion was accurate because it was based upon the facts as presented and was limited to those facts. That the opinion had no import if the facts weren't correct. That explanation was not sufficient to me. After considering the entire situation, I decided I would sign the advisory opinion if I could modify that opinion to clearly state that the facts upon which the opinion was rendered appear to be divergent from facts in the public record. I advised that I would sign the opinion if I was allowed to write the final paragraph and attach this letter of facts to the opinion as exhibit A.

I understood my request would be honored and that I should go and develop that language and bring it to the 1:30 [Monday] meeting with the full committee. To my knowledge I was the only Republican invited to the pre meeting and the only Republican to see the fact letter or the advisory opinion.

I left the 9th floor and went to my office on the 6th floor. On the trip to my office, 3 staff members asked if I was ok. Each commenting that my face was red and my blood pressure might be high. Considering those comments I decided to leave and go for a walk outside. Within 5 minutes I exited Cordell Hull and was less than a block [when] I received a message that the 1:30 meeting had been canceled. To my recollection no reason was given.

It was discussed that the opinion would be used as an exoneration of the Speaker's conduct. Further that if it is to use for such purposes, it must be done with accuracy and integrity befitting the Ethics Committee.

As with some I hold forgiveness as the greatest virtue. Being the beneficiary of forgiveness many times I am eager to offer it to my fellow man. What was said or done 3 years ago deserves to be considered in the light of that person's life journey at that point. My concern with the meeting is that it shows a heart for misrepresentation and political maneuvering to save the requestor's office even at a loss of reputation and integrity of the House Ethics Committee.

This is the most egregious act I have been made aware of. It is not an allegation of past conduct it is proof of present state of mind and present conduct. In my 6 years on the Ethics panel this is wholly without precedent. If the requestor is willing to rig and predetermine an outcome of the ethics committee this week he is in my opinion he is not fit to hold the trust of his office or the state of Tennessee.

I could argue that the text messages are disqualifying. I could argue that knowing and failing to report felony criminal conduct in his presence is disqualifying. I could argue that spending 7 million dollars to operate his office more than Speaker Beth Harwell is disqualifying but respectfully I state that attempting to pre-determine an opinion from the Ethics Committee is the final straw for me.

Respectfully I submit that no other facts are needed. If the ethics panel is not a sacred and trusted institution above rank political maneuvering and conniving then we as a body are lost. I respectfully now call for the immediate resignation of the Speaker. For the good of the people of Tennessee it is time the Republican Caucus lead, not follow, stand straight and firm, not cowering to political threats and pressures, to follow our oaths of office and to vote to remove the speaker.

Knowing this statement will bring political retribution on me and therefore the people of District 29 I make these facts known out of an understanding that my oath as a state representative requires such action and leaves no alternative.

Addendum:

My statement wasn't meant to include Chairman Hill. He made me feel comfortable and acted with professionalism and integrity. Nothing I said should be taken to reflect poorly on Chairman Hill. I apologize to Chairman Hill if my letter was construed in any way as negative towards him.

Respectfully,



Mike Carter
State Representative
District 29

