

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Press@Michigan.gov**Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist II Calls Out Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey for Pattern of Threatening, Sexist Comments**

LANSING, Mich. – Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist II criticized Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey (R-Clarklake) today for his disturbing threats of violence toward the governor and continued efforts to encourage militia groups in the midst of a global pandemic. Over the past year, Shirkey has developed a pattern of using [sexist and inappropriate language](#) in reference to the governor and her administration. In April, Shirkey [shared a stage](#) with members of a violent militia group that later plotted to kidnap the Governor, went on to [meet privately in his Capitol office with violent militia groups](#) about their efforts to rail against Michigan's government and recently claimed the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol last month was a "hoax."

Despite Shirkey's half-hearted attempts at an apology on Tuesday, Shirkey was captured on a hot mic on the Senate floor today insisting to the Lt. Governor that he does not take back any of the statements he has made recently. In response, Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist II issued the following statement:

"As elected officials, what we do and what we say matters, and that is true now more than ever as Michiganders look to us for leadership in steering the state through this ongoing pandemic and economic recovery. But rather than focus on these issues — getting vaccines for people, getting our kids safely back into the classroom and supporting our small businesses — the Senate Majority Leader has chosen to spend his time and energy fanning the flames of dangerous conspiracy theories about the 2020 election and the January 6 insurrection in Washington, alongside aggressive, sexist threats toward the governor. This behavior is beneath the office he was elected to and the standard of decency the people of our state deserve.

"Nevertheless, I stand ready, today, in the middle of a global pandemic that has claimed the lives of nearly 15,000 of our neighbors and loved ones throughout Michigan, to solve the problems this pandemic has created. In my own life, I've lost 27 friends and loved ones to this deadly virus. But despite the staggering impact that this virus continues to have on us all, the Senate Majority Leader is shirking his responsibility to face the crisis at hand, instead doubling down his focus on attacking Governor Whitmer — literally threatening her to a fistfight on the Capitol lawn — and emboldening violent extremists. As a parent, my own children know these types of actions and threats are unacceptable, and I pray that the Senate Majority Leader is capable of evolving beyond such immaturity.

"While the Senate Majority Leader made a half-hearted attempt to address his inexcusable language and behavior last night, and an even weaker attempt during a prayer in today's Senate session, his comments toward me on the Senate floor this morning tell a different story. It is clear that his so-called apology was not heartfelt, nor did it come from a place of humility and understanding. Rather, it was an empty gesture made for political expediency, and one that the people of Michigan can see right through.

"It's time for Republican leaders in the Legislature — including Senate Republican leadership and House Speaker Wentworth — to publicly denounce these types of conspiracies and divisive, violent rhetoric. And it's long-past time for the highest-ranking member of the Legislature to grow up and join the people of Michigan in fighting our common enemy, COVID-19. We are ready to turn the corner and end this pandemic — to pave the pathway to recovery for our people, kids and businesses. That will happen more quickly, and allow us to save more lives, if and when we work together."

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