

With this statement, I am seeking to explain more of the situation from earlier this week. As I stated in my initial statement, the comment attributed to me, was an unflattering remark about a specific individual, absolutely not a generalization. This was the context I provided in my initial statement. I love my state, my people, and I am deeply sorry for the offense this caused and that our state was dragged into this. The contents of the article do not reflect me or the values of our state.

For those that hadn't seen, I spent the last three weeks touring Recovery Residences across the state, top to bottom, to highlight my substance abuse recovery bill. When this story broke, I was at a tour stop giving a speech about recovery and addicted Vermonters. About how we shouldn't judge people because we don't know their whole story, that so many people are marginalized in society, that the stigma that drug users face is based on ignorance, that trauma affects the outcome of your life, and that everyone deserves a second chance.

We just had a baby. Our first. We struggled with fertility for years and we were lucky. I was on paternity leave as of last week and I was just returning to legislative work when this story broke. So, we're still trying to put our house back together and catch up on sleep. Yet, I have received some of the most horrific hate one could imagine. Between calling my wife a "wh*re" and others including phrases like, "we wiped you nazi trash out once and we will again you doublechin, no jawlined incel f*ckface", "Your baby would be better off dead", "I hope your baby gets r*ped", "This world is better off without you.", and "You're wife is a fat ugly pig and needs to be muzzled like a dog." Many of these were made by Vermonters. We've even heard about an online petition circling to have our baby taken away from us. Just today we were sent nasty items in the mail.

Even though I represent a Conservative Republican district, I never wanted to alienate anyone no matter their party, much to the consternation of fellow Republicans. I vowed I would serve in a moderate fashion, like my predecessor, and ensure that everyone's voices were heard. In my first session, I had a landmark agriculture bill passed in my first year, which was the first bill that I ever introduced. I began the work to reform our welfare system to reward struggling families for working more and to ensure that they wouldn't lose all their benefits and fall off the cliff for trying to work more hours. And I pushed back against legislators who overly downplayed environmental issues.

But for all concerned, me, my wife, my family, I must resign (effective Monday at noon). I know that this decision will upset many, and delight others, but in this political climate I must keep my family safe. And if my Governor asks me to do something, I will act, because I believe in what he's trying to do for the state of Vermont.

I will continue to do what I have done my entire life, the very reasons why I was elected; I will help others in my community, be active, foster communication, and look out for others. But regardless, the most important part is the effect—that offense was taken and people were hurt, so I will mend bridges to the best of my ability. Since the story broke, I have reached out to the majority of my Jewish and BIPOC friends and colleagues to ensure that they can be honest and upfront with me, and I know that as a young person I have a duty to set a good example for others.

Since I ran for public office, I've been criticized as being too young or inexperienced, but to all young people I say, don't give up your dreams and don't let people tell you to wait your turn, because maybe we have something to teach them.

I do want to thank the outpouring of supportive messages and emails from constituents and people across the state, and from legislators on both sides of the aisle. Your support of my family will stay with me. I also want to thank those who wanted to hear my side of the story and spoke to me first.