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Leader Armstrong to Speaker Martínez: You Owe New Mexico an Apology

SANTA FE, NM – Today, **House Republican Leader Gail Armstrong (R-Magdalena)** dismissed **House Speaker Javier Martínez's (D-Albuquerque)** demand for an apology and called out his months-long protection of **Truth Commission Chair Andrea Romero (D-Santa Fe)**.

"The Speaker owes an apology to every New Mexican and to the victims this Commission was supposed to serve," said Armstrong. "They were promised the truth about what happened at Zorro Ranch. What they have received so far is an incompetent Chair who unilaterally removed reference to Deb Haaland from the Commission's interim report, used the Commission's taxpayer-funded PR firm to publicly defend her personal criminal employment scandal, and directed the PR firm to conduct political opposition research on legislators and the Attorney General. Republican members of the Truth Commission asked Speaker Martínez to remove Rep. Romero from the Commission twice. He ignored both requests."

Former Representative Andrea Reeb resigned from the Legislature almost immediately upon notification from the U.S. District Court that her contractual work arrangement with several District Attorney's Offices was impermissible. Leader Armstrong continued, "For Speaker Martínez to now question Representative Reeb's conduct, after she sought guidance from the appropriate state authorities and immediately responded to the court's decision, is both disingenuous and misleading."

According to Armstrong, the real controversy is that the Speaker continues to protect Representative Andrea Romero despite a growing list of problems:

- An interim Truth Commission report that cost taxpayers thousands of dollars and did nothing more than summarize other publicly available news reports.
- Representative Romero's unilateral removal of reference to Deb Haaland from the interim report, despite Deb Haaland's confirmed status as a passenger on a plane chartered by Jeffrey Epstein.
- Representative Romero's acceptance of employment as a state employee with the First Judicial District Attorney's Office, a fourth-degree felony.
- Representative Romero's mischaracterization of the information she received from the Attorney General's office that she claimed gave her "explicit authorization" to accept employment with the First Judicial District Attorney's Office.

- Representative Romero's deceptive claim that the Attorney General was attempting to disrupt her work on the Truth Commission when he reiterated, through a memo to the New Mexico District Attorneys Association, that an 83-year-old law prohibited legislators from simultaneously holding state employment.
- Representative Romero's use of Dini von Mueffling Consulting, a taxpayer-funded PR firm, to defend her personally from her criminal employment scandal.
- Dini von Mueffling Consulting's submission of an updated invoice that eliminated five hours the firm had previously billed for the press release issued on behalf of Representative Romero defending her personal employment issue with the First Judicial District Attorney's Office.
- Representative Romero's use of Dini von Mueffling Consulting to conduct political opposition research on fellow legislators and the Attorney General.

These controversial actions by Representative Romero have led to multiple ethics complaints filed with the Interim Legislative Ethics Committee, the New Mexico Ethics Commission, the New Mexico Department of Justice, the New Mexico Supreme Court Disciplinary Board, and the State Auditor.

*"I'm sorry the Speaker didn't take Representative Hall's and former Representative Reeb's requests for Representative Romero's removal from the Truth Commission seriously," said **Leader Armstrong**. "The Speaker does not have the moral high ground to be lecturing anyone about accountability or transparency when he enabled Chair Romero to undermine the integrity of the Truth Commission."*

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