

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 116

Senator Geiss offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to censure Senator Dale Zorn of the Seventeenth
2 Senate District.

3 Whereas, Senator Dale Zorn knowingly and willingly adorned a
4 facemask with a Confederate flag pattern during the Senate session
5 held on April 24, 2020. Further, Senator Zorn issued an apology
6 which demonstrated a lack of appreciation for the seriousness of
7 his actions and the deeply shameful history that flag represents;
8 and

9 Whereas, The Confederate flag is symbol of immense hatred
10 which seeks to celebrate the most disgraceful aspects of our
11 nation's history. The flag was first used as a banner and emblem
12 for those who fought to maintain a system where humans were owned
13 by other humans – a system of slavery. In the years after the Civil

1 War, the flag was – and continues to be – used to intimidate,
2 harass, and terrorize black people and their communities; and

3 Whereas, Proudly wearing a Confederate flag is a direct
4 affront to the one in seven Michiganders who are of African
5 descent. A symbol of white supremacy has no place in a legislative
6 body that is constitutionally obligated to make laws that provide
7 for the equal protection of people of all races; and

8 Whereas, Adorning a Confederate flag dishonors the memory of
9 the brave Michiganders who fought and died to end slavery and who
10 have continued to make sacrifices for civil rights in the century
11 and a half since. Michiganders have given their lives and risked
12 everything to defeat the system and the ideas that the Confederate
13 flag represents. Wearing it on the floor of the Senate demonstrates
14 a lack of proper respect for their memory; and

15 Whereas, Rule 1.301 of the Standing Rules of the Senate
16 provides:

17 Each Senator shall conduct himself or herself to justify
18 the confidence placed in him or her by the people and
19 shall, by personal example and admonition to colleagues,
20 maintain the integrity and responsibility of his or her
21 office.

22 ; and

23 Whereas, Rule 1.311 of the Standing Rules of the Senate
24 provides, in part:

25 A Senator determined to have violated the provisions of
26 the rules regulating ethics and conduct may be reprimanded,
27 censured, or expelled.

28 ; and

29 Whereas, Senator Zorn failed to meet the high standards of

1 conduct expected of his office by the people of Michigan. His
2 decision to wear a facemask adorned with a Confederate flag
3 represents, whether intended or not, contempt for members and staff
4 of this legislative body and the people we represent. Symbols of
5 hatred which dishonor our history and are designed to terrorize
6 black people have no place in the Senate; and

7 Whereas, This legislative body must send a clear message that
8 hatred and white supremacy are unwelcome in this chamber and in our
9 state. We cannot make progress or change by ignoring issues of race
10 or by tolerating examples of hatred – whether overt, covert, by
11 microaggression, or by accident; now, therefore, be it

12 Resolved by the Senate, That Senator Dale Zorn of the
13 Seventeenth Senate District is hereby censured; and be it further

14 Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to
15 Senator Zorn.