

Rep. Pope: Rep. Kooyenga makes lame excuses for suppressing free speech and theft

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MADISON, Wis. – Representative Sody Pope (D-Mt. Horeb) responded to a half-hearted apology issued by Representative Dale Kooyenga (R-Brookfield) last Friday, after [he stole a permitted sign from the Capitol rotunda](#). Rep. Pope was asked by the sign's owner for help in requesting a copy of the video. Mysteriously, Rep. Kooyenga discovered his theft would become public, then made an attempt to misrepresent the content of the sign, claiming that he stole it to "uphold appropriate decorum."

"I would like to say the immaturity, audacity and excuses displayed by Rep. Kooyenga surprise me, but quite frankly, they don't," said Rep. Pope. "It is consistent with the behavior of this party all the way up to the highest levels of our government. "It is sickening to know that an elected official would willingly attempt to deprive a citizen of their constitutionally granted free speech, based on an undocumented complaint."

When the video of the theft was requested by the sign's owner, the request was denied by the Department of Administration (DOA) nearly a month later, citing security concerns. They claimed that releasing the video would reveal camera locations and endanger public safety.

“What may be even more disturbing than this gross violation of free speech, is the fact that the DOA has suppressed the release of this video based on flimsy, manufactured security concerns,” Rep. Pope said. “It is DOA’s responsibility to maintain transparent and free flowing information to the public, not to protect legislators when they commit illegal and petty acts. Even lawmakers should not be above the law.”