

September 2, 2009

To my colleagues in the General Assembly:

During the last two months, we have discovered plenty of solid reasons to remove our current Governor from office; but now there's one more reason: the people trying to keep Mark Sanford in power have stooped to a new low with this week's false character assassination of Lt. Governor Andre Bauer.

You may recall that I was the intended victim of the same type of false internet smear campaign a couple of years ago. A former Sanford employee and political consultant made a totally false claim about me, designed only to damage my character and reputation and embarrass my family. This former Sanford employee shopped this rumor to local TV stations and blogs looking for coverage. Finally a local blogger printed this rumor with the Sanford staffer promising to provide backup information, which he never did. In a matter of hours, the false rumor had reached thousands of people, many of whom believed it.

As a former police investigator for 29 years I know how to gather evidence and track down the real culprits, which I did. When I confronted the author of the blog, along with several of my Senate colleagues as witnesses I learned that the false rumor was intentional. It had been originally given to the blogger by one of Governor Sanford's paid political operatives, a former staffer. The rumor was intended to hurt me because Governor Sanford wanted to defeat me in the upcoming election.

Now, it has happened again.

These same Sanford associates, no longer trusted by the local bloggers turned to a National blog to continue to spread their filth and lies, this time about Lt. Governor Andre Bauer. As one of Andre's closest friends having known him since he was eight years old, I am 100% certain the rumor is false. There are numerous other witnesses who will attest the rumor is without any merit whatsoever. Using my background as an investigator, I noted so many inconsistencies in the original blog statement that I would have immediately concluded the blogger was lying even if I did not know Andre.

The timing of this smear campaign is obviously not a coincidence. Last week, Lt. Governor Andre Bauer called on Governor Mark Sanford to resign, and last weekend, the House Republican Caucus decided almost unanimously to move forward to ask Governor Sanford resign from office, under threat of impeachment. Two days later, the National blogger devised a carefully-crafted smear – intentionally worded to deceive the public about Andre -- which was immediately spread across the Internet by Sanford associates and former staffers.

As a former target of a false rumor started by the Sanford Camp I can tell you with absolute certainty **this attack was orchestrated on behalf of Mark Sanford,**

**either directly or indirectly, and financially subsidized by him or one of his many “front-groups”.**

I am sharing this with you today to ask you for two things:

First, I ask the House and then the Senate to move swiftly to rid our state of this Governor. In view of this and other recent actions, he has moved from a simple embarrassment to a desperate and unstable person which is a danger to our state. As a governor he is not capable of providing the citizens of our state with the leadership they deserve.

Second, I would ask that if any committee or sub-committee, whether it be in the House or the Senate is armed with subpoena powers during any upcoming impeachment proceedings, a full-fledged investigation into this week’s attack against the Lt. Governor be included.

We cannot allow this type of groundless, baseless, Internet slander against public officials to continue to exist in our state. The legislature now has the opportunity to look into ending it once and for all. **If we don’t you and your family could be the next target.**

Thank you and as always, please let me know if I can be of assistance to you in any way.

With regards,

Sincerely,

John M. “Jake” Knotts, Jr.