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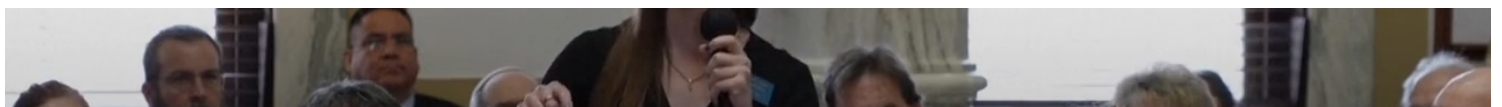
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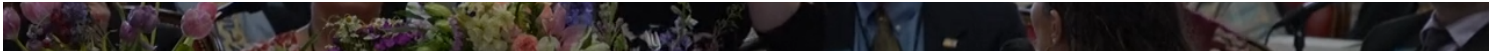
Judge Rejects Zoey Zephyr's Effort To Return To Montana House

Lawyers working under Attorney General Austin Knudsen said any intervention by the courts on Zephyr's behalf would be a blatant violation of the separation of powers.

AP Amy Beth Hanson and Matthew Brown

May 2, 2023, 06:46 PM EDT





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HELENA, Mont. (AP) — Rep. Zoey Zephyr, the transgender Montana lawmaker who was silenced after telling [Republicans](#) they would have blood on their hands for opposing gender-affirming health care for kids, cannot yet return to the statehouse House floor and participate in debate, a judge ruled Tuesday.

The ruling came after attorneys for the state of Montana asked the judge to reject transgender Zephyr's attempt to return after she was silenced and then banished for admonishing Republican lawmakers and encouraging a raucous statehouse protest.

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Lawyers working under Attorney General Austin Knudsen cautioned that any intervention by the courts on Zephyr's behalf would be a blatant violation of the separation of powers. They wrote in a court



constitutional authority to discipline its own members.

Attorneys for Zephyr and several of her Missoula constituents on Monday filed court papers seeking an emergency order allowing her to return to the House floor for the final days of the 2023 legislative session.

Zephyr and fellow [Democrats](#) have denounced her [exclusion from floor debates](#) as an assault on free speech that's intended to silence her criticism of new restrictions on [gender-affirming care for minors](#).

But lawyers for the state said the censure of Zephyr by her Republican colleagues was “for good cause” following the April 24 demonstration by her supporters.

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“One legislator cannot be allowed to halt the ability of the other 99 to engage in civil, orderly, debate concerning issues affecting Montana,” the state’s lawyers wrote.

GOP leaders under [pressure from hard-line conservatives](#) initially silenced Zephyr from participating in floor debates and demanded she apologize almost two weeks ago, after she said those who

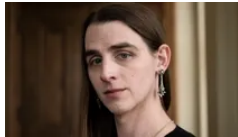


[BLOOD ON THEIR HANDS.](#)

On April 24, Zephyr raised a microphone in defiance on the House floor as protesters in the gallery demanded she be allowed to speak and refused orders to leave. Seven people were arrested on trespassing charges and two days later lawmakers voted along party lines to oust Zephyr from the floor and gallery for the remainder of the session.

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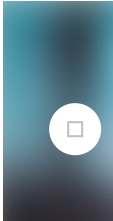
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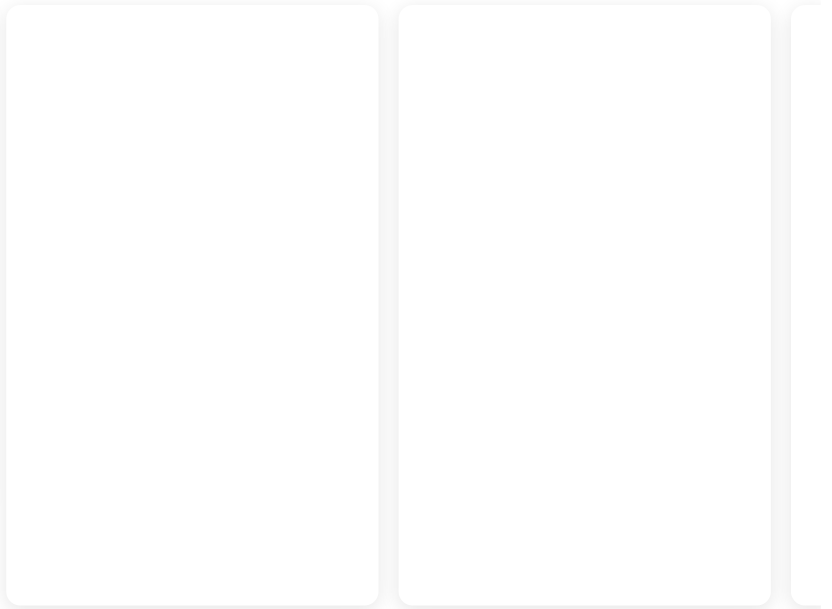
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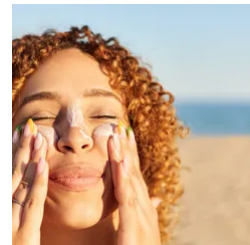
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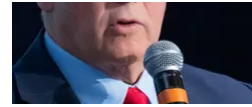


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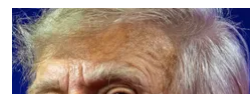
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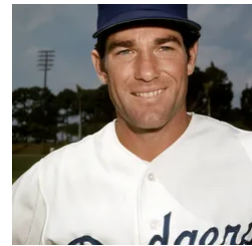
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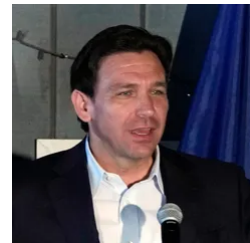
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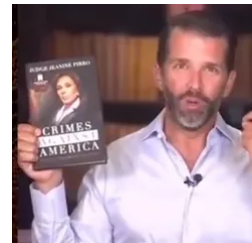
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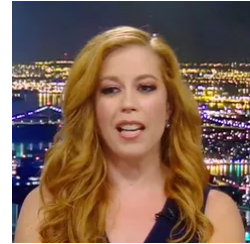




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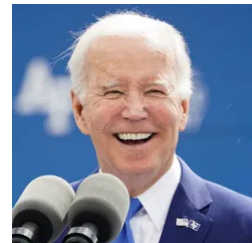
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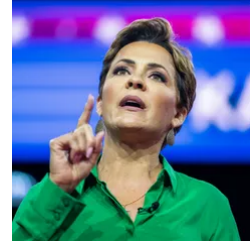




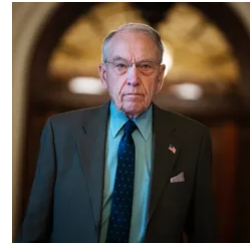
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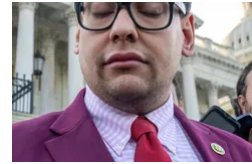


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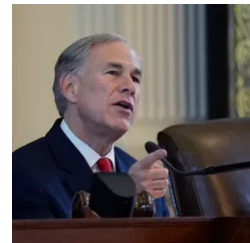
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