



THE FLORIDA SENATE

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

COMMITTEES:

Rules, *Vice Chair*
Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation,
Tourism, and Economic Development
Banking and Insurance
Education
Judiciary
Regulated Industries

JOINT COMMITTEE:

Joint Legislative Auditing Committee

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SENATE
RULES COMMITTEE

SENATOR PERRY E. THURSTON, JR.
Democratic Caucus Rules Chair
33rd District

April 19, 2017

The Honorable Lizbeth Benacquisto
400 Senate Office Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

Dear Chair Benacquisto,

Pursuant to Senate Rule 1.43, I am filing a complaint with you as Chair of the Senate Rules Committee for the expulsion of Sen. Frank Artiles for the egregious comments I heard him make to Sen. Audrey Gibson and others at the Governor's Club Lounge on Monday, April 17.

Sen. Artiles referred to Sen. Gibson as a "bitch" and a "girl" during a late night tirade. He also referred to President Negron as "a pussy." I heard him use the word "nigger" when he was talking to Sen. Gibson and others about President Negron's election as Senate President. This was a reference to other Republican Senators who supported President Negron. Sen. Artiles claims that he used the word "niggas" when referencing the Senators in question.

Finally, Sen. Gibson told me Monday night that Sen. Artiles also called her "a fucking asshole" during an exchange I did not hear. I asked Sen. Artiles if he had said that, and he denied it initially, but then apologized for calling her "a fucking asshole."

Senate Rule 1.35, Legislative conduct, reads: "Every Senator shall conduct himself or herself to justify the confidence placed in him or her by the people and, by personal example and admonition to colleagues, shall maintain the integrity and responsibility of his or her office."

Sen. Artiles' conduct justifies expulsion from the Senate, a remedy that is available under Rule 1.43.

His behavior at the Governor's Club Lounge was a clear violation of Senate Rule 1.35, and the shadow he has cast over our chamber deserves the most severe punishment available. His publicly delivered comments were overheard by elected officials and citizens alike who were in attendance. These comments have now been widely reported by the state and national media, bringing more disrepute to the Florida Senate.

REPLY TO:

- 2151 NW 6th Street, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33311 (954) 321-2705 FAX: (954) 321-2707
- 208 Senate Office Building, 404 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100 (850) 487-5033

Senate's Website: www.flsenate.gov

JOE NEGRON
President of the Senate

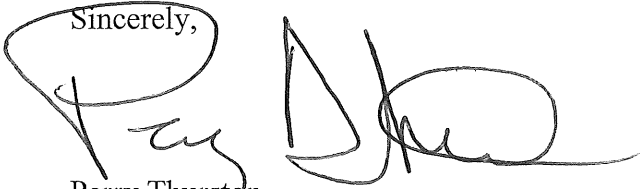
ANITERE FLORES
President Pro Tempore

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Pursuant to Senate Rule 1.43, I request that you appoint a special master to investigate Sen. Artiles' actions immediately so this matter can be dealt with by the full Senate before we adjourn on May 5 and we can remove him from the Senate.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

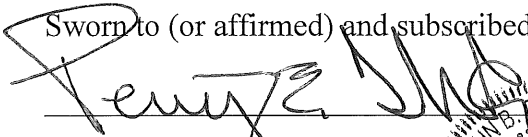


Perry Thurston
Senate District 33

CC: President, Joe Negron
Senator Audrey Gibson
Senator Frank Artiles

I, the person bringing this complaint, do depose on oath or affirmation and say that the facts set forth in the forgoing complaint are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Sworn to (or affirmed) and subscribed before me this 19th day of April, 2017 by



(Signature of Notary Public — State of Florida)

(Print, Type or Stamp Commissioned Name of Notary Public

Personally known OR Produced Identification

