

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 17, 2021

Contact: Matt Baca -- (505) 270-7148

**Attorney General Hector Balderas Demands Couy Griffin Resign from
Otero County Commission**

Office of the Attorney General to Seek Removal if Griffin Fails to Resign

*Santa Fe, NM---*Today, Attorney General Hector Balderas announced that he has demanded that Couy Griffin resign from the Otero County Commission. In a letter sent to Griffin Saturday, the Attorney General demanded his resignation on multiple grounds, including accusations that he has misused public office for personal gain, has neglected his duties as a county commissioner, and because of his participation in the January 6th insurrectionist attack on the United States Capitol. The letter states that absent his resignation, the Office of the Attorney General will take all appropriate legal action to seek Griffin's removal. This demand also comes as Griffin has reportedly been arrested by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

"An elected office is a public trust, and no official should use it to encourage violence and attack Americans," said Attorney General Balderas. "My office will enforce the rule of law to ensure the public's confidence."

A copy of the demand letter is attached.

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STATE OF NEW MEXICO
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL



HECTOR H. BALDERAS
ATTORNEY GENERAL

January 16, 2021

Via Email

Couy Griffin
Otero County Commission
1101 New York Avenue
Alamogordo, NM 88310
cgriffin@co.otero.nm.us

Mr. Griffin,

All public officials in the State of New Mexico have the duty to treat their position as a public trust, to use their office to advance only the public benefit, and at all times act in a manner that justifies the public's confidence in them. *See* NMSA 1978, § 10-16-3. Because of this unwavering obligation, I am writing to put you on notice that I will seek your removal from office unless you immediately resign from the Otero County Commission. In the last two years, you have been accused of using public money to advance your personal profile and agenda¹, used the platform given to you by your status as a Commissioner to spread racism², demean

¹ *State Auditor investigating donations made to Couy Griffin*, Alamogordo Daily News, October 26, 2020, <https://www.alamogordonews.com/story/news/local/community/2020/10/26/new-mexico-auditor-investigating-donations-cowboys-trump-couy-griffin/5996805002/>

² *New Mexico Republicans, Trump respond to Couy Griffin's 'go back to Africa' video*, Alamogordo Daily News, July 29, 2020, <https://www.alamogordonews.com/story/news/local/community/2020/07/29/trump-new-mexico-republicans-democrats-couy-griffin-go-back-africa-video/5525522002/>

Native Americans³, and have made threatening remarks to political opponents⁴. My office also has information that you have failed to discharge your basic duties as Otero County Commissioner, having, for instance, devoted so much time to your private commercial endeavors that you have failed to attend to constituent concerns, forcing other commissioners to assist constituents in your assigned district with their issues. These acts alone represent conduct unbecoming of an elected official.

Moreover, your recent participation in the violent insurrectionist attack on the United States Capitol, the stated purpose of which was to prohibit the certification of the nation's election of the President of the United States, is a direct violation of your sworn oath of office, and a danger to our society. Your incendiary comments from the steps of the Capitol and your calls to incite violence against the foundation of our nation's democracy cannot be tolerated from an elected official. It is clear that you are no longer qualified to hold your position as a commission member.

Your oath to uphold the New Mexico and United States Constitutions now demands your resignation. If you do not immediately resign, as required by that oath, my office will take all appropriate legal action for your removal.

Sincerely,



Hector Balderas
New Mexico Attorney General

cc: **Gerald Matherly**, District One Commissioner (gmatherly@co.otero.nm.us)
Vickie Marquardt, District Three Commissioner (vmarquardt@co.otero.nm.us)
Pamela Heltner, Otero County Manager (pheltner@co.otero.nm.us)

³ *Mescalero Apache Tribe bans Otero County Commissioner Couy Griffin from reservation*, Alamogordo Daily News, Sept. 29, 2020, <https://www.alamogordonews.com/story/news/local/community/2020/09/29/mescalero-apache-tribe-bans-couy-griffin-cowboys-for-trump-videos/3580163001/>

⁴ *New Mexico county commissioner: 'The only good Democrat is a dead Democrat'*, Alamogordo Daily News, May 20, 2020 <https://www.alamogordonews.com/story/news/local/new-mexico/2020/05/20/otero-county-commissioner-couy-griffin-in-only-good-democrat-dead-democrat/5220170002/>