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Freedom Fund: Strip Bert Johnson of Committee Assignments, Staff in Wake of FBI Investigation, Grand Jury

Democratic Leader Jim Ananich Should Request Caucus Member Be Stripped of Benefits Until Questions Answered

LANSING, MI, March 29, 2017 –The Michigan Freedom Fund today called on Senate Democratic Leader Jim Ananich to formally request state Senator Bert Johnson be removed from his Senate Committee assignments and stripped of staff and other member benefits in the wake of Monday’s shocking raid of the lawmaker’s home and office by the FBI and Michigan State Police.

Reports indicate Johnson may also be the subject of a grand jury investigation, potentially over the alleged use of “no-show” or “ghost” employees used to illegally funnel taxpayer dollars directly into Johnson’s pockets.

“Jim Ananich should break the mold for his caucus and do the right thing by taking every step to strip Bert Johnson of his committee assignments, staff, and other benefits,” said Freedom Fund President Terri Reid. “With FBI, state police, and a grand jury actively investigating Johnson, he is the last person who should be sitting in a Senate committee, writing laws. It’s time to protect taxpayers and Johnson’s constituents in the middle of this evolving scandal. Ananich should act to strip him of staff, office expenses, and his committee assignments immediately.”

Johnson sits on the Senate Families, Seniors, and Human Services, Insurance, Regulatory Reform, and Outdoor, Recreation and Tourism Committees.

Bert Johnson has a long history of trouble with the law and refusing to pay his bills. In 2015, a warrant was issued for his arrest in Illinois in connection with overdue political consulting bills, and Johnson served time before being elected to the legislature as a result of his participation in an armed robbery in Oakland County.

Michigan Democrats have been linked to an unprecedented number of corruption and other investigations since Johnson was last elected to the Senate. Earlier this year, state Representative Brian Banks resigned in disgrace to avoid a potential life sentence in connection

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with felony bank fraud charges. Last year, state Senator Virgil Smith resigned and served time in prison after being arrested for assaulting his ex-wife and opening fire on her car with a rifle.

Michigan Freedom Fund is a nonprofit organization run by Michiganders for Michiganders, working to advance, promote, and protect Michigan workers' Constitutional rights. For more information on the Freedom Fund, please visit www.MichiganFreedomFund.com.

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