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Schultheis accuses Ritter of 'continuing to divide Coloradans' over racial policies

Reacting to news that Gov. Bill Ritter has hired a “minority-outreach coordinator” as part of his administration's Economic Recovery Team, Colorado Springs Republican state Sen. Dave Schultheis denounced the Democrat governor today for “furthering racism and sexism.”

Schultheis said the administration's announcement of the new post last week devalues the work of all Coloradans who are not members of minority groups and “should no longer be acceptable in Colorado.” The position as touted by Ritter's office in a press release last week will help track and administer federal stimulus funds coming to the state.

“This is a governor who purports to represent all people, and he should do just that—not focus on race and gender as some sort of defining criteria,” Schultheis said.

Schultheis also said if there are any strings attached to federal funding that requires special emphasis on race or gender, those funds should be rejected.

“Ritter should be focusing only on non-discriminatory practices,” said the veteran Springs lawmaker. “Not doing so continually divides our citizens into groups that work against each other and creates enmity between them.”

Schultheis noted that it was the late civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. who had envisioned a society whose citizens are judged not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

“In that spirit,” Schultheis said, “I call on the governor to rescind the creation of this unnecessary and divisive position in his bureaucracy. Gov. Ritter’s emphasis on continuing to divide Coloradans into groups is unacceptable.”

Schultheis also wants the governor to consider elimination of his Minority Business Office.

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