

RELEASE: DEMOCRATIC LEADERS RESPOND TO FEDERAL COURT RULING

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CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE – Following the ruling by a U.S. District Court Judge that the House Speaker’s refusal to provide remote accommodations for House Members with disabilities is protected by legislative immunity, **Democratic Leader Representative Renny Cushing (D-Hampton) and Deputy Democratic Leader David Cote (D-Nashua)** released the following statement:

“While today’s ruling is a setback, history will judge New Hampshire House Democrats favorably for standing for public health and democracy during this pandemic,” said **Representative Renny Cushing (D-Hampton)**. “Unfortunately, this case has exposed the callous indifference of House Republican leadership toward our most vulnerable members during the COVID-19 crisis that has taken the lives of a half a million Americans.”

“This suit was rejected on the narrow claim of legislative immunity. We have never had any desire to disrupt the function of the House. After months of being stonewalled by the Speaker’s Office and House Republicans, we filed this suit to make sure that every single duly elected member of the House, Democrat or Republican, has the ability to represent their constituents without reasonable fear of the health and safety of themselves and their communities.

All this ruling means is that the Speaker is solely to blame for active and obvious exclusion of members of the House. As we teach our children, just because you can do something does not mean you should. The Speaker, with support from his Republican Majority, could pass any number of absurd rules that would prohibit specific members from participating. I think that the role of the Speaker should be to protect the rights of every single member to freely represent their constituents.”

Representative David Cote (D-Nashua) added, “The continuing failure of the Speaker to provide a remote option for those of us whose health is significantly at risk in large gatherings such as a house session, remains a blot on the institution of the House.”

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