

*NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt*

04/26/23

6:31:11 p.m. [TEASE]

7 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Breaking News; Trans Montana Lawmaker Punished]

LESTER HOLT: Just breaking, Republicans in the Montana legislature punish a transgender lawmaker barred from speaking on the floor.

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6:40:24 p.m.

1 minute and 43 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Breaking News; Lawmaker Barred from Floor]

HOLT: We have breaking news from Montana. Republican representatives just voted to bar a transgender lawmaker from the House floor. It follows a heated back and forth over gender affirming medical care for kids. Anne Thompson reports.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Breaking News; Trans Montana Lawmaker Banned from the State House Floor]

ANNE THOMPSON: Montana State Representative Zooey Zephyr, the state's first transgender legislator, tonight is banned from the House floor for the rest of this year's session.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ZOOEY ZEPHYR (D-MT): This decision is a doubling down of the silencing of 11,000 Montanans.

THOMPSON: Today's action follows a fiery Zephyr speech made last week as her colleagues considered a ban on gender-affirming medical care for children.

ZEPHYR: I hope the next time there's an invocation, when you bow your heads in prayer, you see the blood on your hands.

THOMPSON: House Republican leaders said the Democrat broke decorum and prevented her from speaking in floor debate. Then she was accused of inciting this protest on Monday.

PROTESTERS: Let her speak! Let her speak!

THOMPSON: Republican leaders making the case against her today.

MONTANA HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER SUE VINTON (R): "No person may participate in conduct that disrupts or disturbs the orderly proceedings of the body."

THOMPSON: Zephyr refusing to apologize.

ZEPHYR: When the speaker asks me to apologize, what he is — on behalf of decorum, what he is really asking me to do is be silent when my community is facing bills that get us killed.

THOMPSON: The majority Republican body censured the freshman representative. Zephyr will only be allowed to vote remotely. Tonight, Zephyr says though she may not be permitted to speak on the floor, she will continue to work behind the scenes. Anne Thompson, NBC News.