

**From:** [Peel, Jackson](#)  
**To:** [FLHouseDems](#)  
**Subject:** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: The Florida Legislative Black Caucus Denounces Representative Barnaby's Hateful Comments  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 11, 2023 4:04:44 PM

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 10, 2023

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**The Florida Legislative Black Caucus Denounces Representative Barnaby's Hateful Comments**

**Tallahassee, Fla.** – On Monday while debating [House Bill 1421](#), a bill that has harmful implications for the trans community here in Florida, **Representative Webster Barnaby (R- Deland)** made a series of hateful and derogatory statements against members of the trans community, calling them “Mutants, Demons, and Imps.” Chair of the Florida Legislative Black Caucus **Representative Dianne Hart (D- Tampa)** felt it necessary that the caucus take a stand against such hateful rhetoric.

**Representative Hart** issued the following statement, “What we witnessed Monday is textbook transphobia and hate. It is unfortunate that members of the Legislature have thought it wise to resort to such unnecessary and harmful words when debating bills. To make matters worse, they use God’s name, a God who said that “the greatest commandment is love,” to spread such hate. The actions displayed today are not Christ-like. This type of behavior has no place in the Florida Legislature, there should swift action taken as a result of this. Representative Barnaby should be censured and held accountable.”

**Representative Michele Rayner-Goolsby (D- St. Petersburg)** issued the following statement:

“The disgusting and hateful rhetoric used by Representative Barnaby further illustrates the divisive culture that the Republicans have created in this legislature. It is unconscionable that an elected official would refer to any citizen of the State of Florida as “mutants,” “demons,” or “imps.”

Words like these lay a foundation for people to be harmed and ostracized. The extreme language used in yesterday’s House Commerce Committee was reminiscent of that used in 1930 Nazi Germany to justify genocide. Members of the legislature can have policy disagreements without devaluing and endangering our constituents. I am calling on the Speaker of the House to sanction Representative Barnaby expeditiously.”

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