

## **WyoFile's inquiry:**

Good afternoon, I'm reaching out because I'm working on a story about the working relationship between the governor and the secretary of state.

Both electeds have openly expressed frustrations and criticisms of one another, both online and at recent meetings. I'm interested in helping Wyomingites understand how that affects the ability of the state's top two electeds to work together.

Out of fairness, I'm sending along an identical inquiry to both offices with the same questions at the same time. Below are those questions.

- Are ongoing tensions hampering the ability of the two electeds to work together and to accomplish the people's business?
- How has the situation affected communication between the two offices?
- Do you anticipate being able to work together for the duration of your terms?
- What would you want Wyomingites to understand about this situation?

My deadline is Monday at 3 pm.

## **Gordon's response:**

1. The "tensions" are little more than a distraction. The Secretary seems overly eager to manufacture issues to garner attention from the media or get views on Facebook; it reveals his inexperience as a statesman. It is sad that he wants to resort to half-truths or outright deception. My hope is he will focus on the demands of his current position, even if his ambitions to other offices are getting the best of him.

For my part, I am confident the people of Wyoming can see that I am singularly focused on "accomplishing the people's business." I will continue to work with him, and others, to protect our property rights, our core industries, our children's futures, and strengthen our economy. That's what I was elected to do by an overwhelming majority.

2. It hasn't. Case in point, we just authorized independent counsel to defend Wyoming's new voter law per the Secretary's request and our offices communicate with each other regularly.
3. The wellbeing of the people of Wyoming is my top priority. As Governor, it is my job to work with him, so absolutely I will work with him for as long as we serve together.
4. For my part, the SOS's declared criticisms and over-reactions are what Lincoln called "pernicious distractions." They are not often anchored in truth, but apparently serve some purpose for him as an attempt to raise his stature. He should know better because he once mentioned to me, "even though we have not always agreed, but you have listened." I have always believed it is important to not only listen but also carefully consider points of view that may not be my own. All of this perceived drama is more of a sideshow than an impediment to working together.

### **Gray's response:**

My disagreements with Governor Mark Gordon are about policy. The pattern of our political disagreements over the last six years have followed the same pattern. Gordon's whole political strategy is to advance the most liberal policies possible, while providing made up excuses as to why common sense conservative policies can't be achieved. Because his allies in the media also want liberal policies, they repeat his misleading claims and excuses.

But what has made us particularly effective is that I'm not afraid to stand up to Gordon's false statements and expose them as being false talking points and excuses of the Left. Gordon understands that the exposure of how liberal his preferred policies are presents a particular problem for him. So Gordon responds to my statements with personal attacks and theatrics, because he doesn't want to have a policy debate. Gordon wants to respond with personal attacks because he knows that a policy debate would actually expose how liberal he is and how out of touch he is with the people of Wyoming.

It has become clear that the only way that Gordon ever allows conservative proposals to become law is when people like myself point out how liberal his vetoes and policies have been. The fact that I exposed this liberalism has

ensured that we are particularly effective. While Gordon refused to sign the common sense election integrity measures like proof of citizenship for registering to vote or the bill stopping Democrats from entering the Republican Primary, they were allowed to become law without his signature because Gordon knew that we would not be afraid to point out how liberal any veto would be.

We fundamentally disagree on a variety of issues, ranging from my emphasis on supporting Wyoming's core coal, oil and gas, agriculture, and soda ash core industries to basic, common-sense election integrity measures. I disagree with Gordon when his liberal decisions are not reflective of the conservative will of what the people of Wyoming voted for, and what I hear when I travel the state. In that way, Gordon treats me the same way he treats conservatives across the state, with disdain.

Sadly, Gordon's response to these foundational policy differences has been to resort to personal attacks against me and others that are more conservative than him. For example, Gordon calls me a "grandstander." By Gordon's definition, anyone who tries to carry out the will of the people that they represent are "grandstanders." What this attack shows is how out of touch Gordon is. Listening to the will of the people I represent does not make me a "grandstander". Rather, it makes me an effective listener who follows through on what the people express to me as their priorities through townhalls and other conversations. Gordon is actually a grandstander when he responds to calmly presented policy points by interrupting and shouting to stop conservatives from being able to make their points.

He has repeatedly called my questions and motions on the State Board of Land Commissioners and the State Loan and Investment Board "annoying," and responded to many of our election integrity measures with contempt. This is part of a continuing pattern in which Gordon labels those he disagrees with on foundational principles such as energy, "[stupid](#)." In his refusal to sign Wyoming's proof of citizenship requirement, he [claimed](#) my rulemaking process, done in strict accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, was an attempt to "usurp" the legislative process, despite the overwhelming response of the Legislature, and Wyoming, in support of providing proof of citizenship for voting. When we then went to the legislature and passed proof of citizenship and proof of residency bills, Gordon refused to sign the bills and wrote a four page letter repeating talking points of the radical Left. Gordon's refusal to support common sense proof of citizenship requirements puts Gordon in total conflict with a key

priority of the Trump administration. Gordon's talking points were then used by radical Leftwing attorney Marc Elias in his lawsuit against us.

And one of the amazing things is how many of Gordon's attacks actually describe him, not me, a common tactic of politicians who are on the defense. For example, in his [office newsletter](#) that was sent to berate a series of my policy-related disagreements with him, he falsely claimed that my opposition to green-new-deal wind leases on state lands is an abridgement of "private property" rights. But what he forgets is that the lease that was voted upon by the State Board of Land Commissioners was a state lease, not a private lease, so this is another example of Governor Gordon's misleading statements. He also stated publicly that my vote was in conflict with my "fiduciary responsibility to earn the best return for the state and our schools." Gordon has falsely tried to claim that any revenue proposal presented to the board must be approved to be in compliance with his false definition of the "fiduciary duty." What he leaves out is that under his own definition, Gordon would have been in violation of the "fiduciary duty" when Gordon voted against an oil and gas lease in 2023 because environmentalists protested it. Not only are these statements false, but they severely misunderstand our role as Constitutional members of the SBLC and SLIB.

Perhaps most insulting of all to the people of Weston County, and Wyoming, was the governor's response to our independent investigative findings concerning the Weston County Clerk. He responded to our press conference within an hour or so by claiming I just "[like to make a lot of noise,](#)" rather than actually reading the very serious findings that our investigation found. Not surprisingly, his explanation for declining to take any action to further investigate removal of Clerk Hadlock entirely ignored our findings and conclusion that Clerk Hadlock submitted a false post-election audit report with our office, which we discussed multiple times as the most serious finding in our investigation released in March.

Although Gordon and media insiders have claimed otherwise, I think Wyoming benefits from the vibrant policy debates that have been brought to the forefront since I have become an elected official. Wyomingites demand dialogue concerning some of the most important decisions taken, not elected officials that simply rubber-stamp everything on a consent list.

*(Editor's note: After responding to WyoFile's inquiries, Secretary Gray sent a handful of additional statements. They are printed below.)*

### **Gray's first follow-up:**

2 other additions from what I just sent:

I have been particularly troubled with the way that Governor Gordon seems to have a disdain for public comment. For example, he refused to grant my request to move last week's State Board of Land Commissioners meeting to Casper. Last year, in Casper, Gordon refused to take public comment regarding the Columbus Peak Land Exchange until I brought a motion allowing it.

Another example of how Gordon resorts to personal attacks that actually apply to him, rather than others, is when he accuses me of not being from Wyoming. The part that he leaves out is that the argument actually applies to him, because he was born in New York City. This hypocrisy shows one of the common tactics of the Left that Gordon also uses. Gordon routinely accuses others of what he is guilty of.

### **Gray's second follow-up:**

1 other thing: Gordon doesn't like that we expose the truth about his liberal actions. Gordon doesn't like that we pointed out that he took the state jet on the taxpayer dime to throw our industries under the bus when he gave his speech at Harvard. Gordon also doesn't like that I ask him what his vote is on the State Board of Land Commissioners, because Gordon has re(fuses to vote and attempts to hide it but not announcing that he is abstaining.

*(Editor's note: After this story was published, Gov. Mark Gordon's office provided WyoFile with WYDOT [monthly flight reports](#) for [October 2023](#) showing the governor did not use the state airplane to fly to Boson for his talk at Harvard.)*

### **Gray's third follow-up:**

I always keep our conversations focused on policy and about advancing our conservative goals. It's the Governor who then responds with a troubling pattern of projection and personal attacks, which is in keeping with the tactics of the radical Left.