

# PHOENIX REPUBLIC

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## Legislator crass in remarks to 5th-graders

I'm writing to bring awareness to the inappropriateness with which state Rep. Carl Seel, R-Phoenix,



**Carl Seel**

addressed a group of Lookout Mountain Elementary students on a visit to the Capitol.

While I sat with my daughter and her fifth-grade class in the House gallery, engaged with our guide in an interactive lesson about Arizona govern-

ment, Seel dropped in on our group. One of the children asked what the chairs on the side of the chamber were for. Seel replied, "Those chairs are for the press — if I don't shoot them first." He laughed nervously and added, "Just kidding, ha, ha, ha. I should've asked if anyone here is with the press before I



**LORI  
APPLEBY  
HOKE**

### MY TURN

said that. Um, is anyone here with the press?"

This was his second reference to shooting the press in the five minutes he spent with us. These words hardly seemed befitting of an elected official addressing a group of children.

The visit was shortly before the election. Another child asked where Jackie Thrasher would sit when she won the election. (Thrasher recently retired from teaching at Lookout Mountain in order to run for office.)

Seel delivered a belabored explanation of where Rep. Jim Weiers would continue to sit after defeating Thrasher in the election. All these kids wanted was to see where their beloved music

teacher might sit, and Seel could not grasp the nature of that innocent request. I found it hard to believe that the only way he could relate to these fifth-graders was to politicize this simple question.

Seel had a prime opportunity to talk to the children about the importance and privilege of voting. Yet I got the distinct feeling from the frequency with which he kept checking his watch that he was more preoccupied with making his way outside to join a "tea party" rally than he was engaged with the children.

Had he any vision, he would have encouraged them to discuss the upcoming election at home with their parents or touched on why Arizona is a great state to live in or asked them how they could become involved in their communities.

Instead, he chose to politicize and

make derogatory remarks about journalists and their First Amendment rights.

In a letter I sent him, I told him I found his comments offensive, short-sighted and out of line. I also told him an apology to the fifth-graders at Lookout Mountain was in order for his remarks. I received a response in which he apologized to me about his comment about the press, but he did not mention apologizing to the students.

At our visit to the Capitol, he gushed about how transparent he is to his constituents. I agree with Rep. Seel on his transparency. I can see through him, and I'm not impressed.

*Lori Appleby Hoke is a communications manager, a writer, the mother of two daughters and a native of Phoenix.*