



South Carolina GOP Wants Sanford Out — Now

State GOP lawmakers in South Carolina are furious at Governor Mark Sanford over his admitted adulterous affair and associated misuse of state funds and resources. However, the 73 legislators stopped short of forcing the governor's resignation or initiating impeachment proceedings per the procedures set forth in the state constitution.

Their perceived reticence to take action did not deter Sanford's fellow Republicans from sending their erstwhile leader a clear and unequivocal message: they want him out and they want it done immediately. They suggest that any further delay will unforgivably compound the disgrace they have already suffered as a result of his behavior, as well as dishonor the dignity of the Palmetto state's government and people. If Governor Sanford genuinely cares for his constituency, they argue, then his prompt resignation is the most obvious demonstration of that concern.



In June, Governor Sanford disappeared for five days, igniting a statewide controversy that drew the attention of the entire nation and that persists and dogs the governor daily. Upon returning to Columbia, Governor Sanford proffered several explanations for his mysterious departure until finally coming clean and admitting to traveling to Buenos Aires to meet an Argentine woman with whom he had been carrying on a clandestine affair. The disclosure was embarrassing to himself and shocking to his family, including his wife of 20 years.

Beyond the personal implications of such base behavior, Governor Sanford faces charges of ethical violations, including his alleged misuse of a government-owned plane, business class commercial travel, and accepting flights on private planes owned by political supporters, all in furtherance of the pursuit and wooing of his South American paramour. These allegations are as potentially devastating to Sanford's professional life as the elicit affair has been on his personal life. The harm he has caused in both areas of his life is immeasurable and undeniably long-lasting.

For their part, South Carolina Republicans are mulling over an official call to send a letter to Sanford demanding he resign and save himself and his state the additional shame of an impeachment investigation and trial. Speaker of the House pro tem, Harry F. Cato, asked his Republican counterparts meeting at Myrtle Beach: "Is there anybody in this room that feels the governor should not resign? I don't hear anybody defending him."

Remarkably, Governor Sanford vows to fight on and keep his job. He adamantly resists the daily and



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determined overtures from foe and friend alike pleading with him to surrender his post. With occupational self-preservation as his goal, Sanford has set off on what the *Wall Street Journal* calls a “forgiveness tour” of South Carolina. Sanford hopes that by taking his case to the people he can rehabilitate his image, be absolved by voters, and do a shifty political end run around the efforts of his own party to remove him from the highest state office, whose dignity, they claim, Sanford has sullied long enough.

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