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Fortenberry tells opponents to 'not frighten my children' after profane protest sign is found at his home

By Paul Hammel / World-Herald Bureau May 11, 2017

LINCOLN — U.S. Rep. Jeff Fortenberry, R-Neb., is asking that his children be spared profane protest signs like the one he discovered in front of his east Lincoln home Thursday morning.

“Be angry with me, direct your protest at me, but do not frighten my children in their home,” said Fortenberry, who posted the comment and a picture of the sign Thursday on his Facebook page and on Twitter.



Rep. Jeff Fortenberry

The sign was placed by a protest group called “The Betsy Riot” which has appeared, in masks and long gowns, to demonstrate at recent public appearances of Gov. Pete Ricketts, and U.S. Sens. Deb Fischer and Ben Sasse, all Republicans.

Nationally, the group has opposed actions by President Donald Trump and appeared at meetings of the National Rifle Association, offering signs that call the group “the murder lobby.”

The hand-written sign placed in Fortenberry’s yard read: “Traitors put party above country. Do the right thing for once, s- - - head.”

The poster was signed “Betsy Riot” and appeared on the Facebook page of “The Betsy Riot,” though it did not explain the context of the message.

A spokesman for Fortenberry, Drew Bowling, said this is the first time a protest sign was placed at the congressman’s home. Bowling said the incident had been reported to Lincoln police.



Previously, there have been “intermittent” protests at Fortenberry’s office in Lincoln, the spokesman said. One was scheduled over the noon hour Thursday to object to the congressman’s support for repealing the Affordable Care Act.

The Betsy Riot members typically do not say anything when they show up at a protest, but often display pointed and sometimes vulgar messages on their signs.

“Who would Jesus Execute?” was one of the signs displayed at a State Capitol Christmas program that featured Ricketts, a supporter of the death penalty.

Betsy Riot members clad in black held up a giant coat hanger across the street from Sasse’s home during Sunday’s Lincoln Marathon, an apparent reference to the senator’s opposition to abortion rights.

paul.hammel@owh.com, 402-473-9584