

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: May 23, 2023

Former Director of Colorado's COVID-19 Innovation Response Sarah Tuneberg Sets the Record Straight

Denver, CO – The former director of Colorado's COVID-19 Innovation Response Sarah Tuneberg, who recently spoke out against Mike Johnston for [taking credit for something her team should be taking credit for](#), spoke out once again to set the record straight.

Tuneberg states, “this is about Mike Johnston’s lies and exaggerations. It is about his lack of ethics and what that means in a role like Mayor. It’s about Mike taking credit for my work and that of my team– about him trying to erase me, a regular woman who worked with hundreds of other regular people, with no power and nothing to gain (as so many male politicians have done before!).”

Kelly Brough respects Tuneberg, believes her story and said:

“Michael Johnston’s campaign is trying to intentionally distract from the reports about him exaggerating his resume and taking credit for the work of others, especially the work of women,” said Kelly Brough. **“I don’t know Sarah Tuneberg but I respect the work she and her team did to lead the state’s response to COVID testing, and the courage she has shown to speak out. And I believe her. My opponent owes Sarah and Denver residents an honest explanation about why he is inflating his resume and taking credit for other people’s work. Today, more than ever, we need elected officials who are honest and transparent.”**

Sarah Tuneberg posted:

Frustratingly, a clip of that interview is a part of a campaign ad and has confused the situation. I didn't expect to be in your living room on an attack ad, especially one that doesn't do a great job explaining what I said and why I spoke out. I understand now that ad is being attacked by Mike Johnston and I am in their cross fire. Rather than respond to my criticism that Mike is being dishonest, misleading and exaggerating, the conversation has switched to one about the ad.

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Eventually, in late November, COVIDCheck, an organization co-founded by Mike Johnston joined this effort as a vendor. But the work that enabled Colorado's amazing testing progress was well underway before COVIDCheck was even a registered entity. On his website, in debates, in interviews, and in conversations I've observed, Mike Johnston overstates the dramatic embellishment of the role COVIDCheck played in the COVID response. He said that if you got a covid test, you probably got it from COVIDCheck. Not true– they are responsible for about 10% of the tests over the whole of the pandemic – even less if you consider rapid tests. He said that he built the playbook for community testing. Not true– my team issued the first Community Testing Playbook on April 14 (happy birthday to me!), also before COVIDCheck even existed. In a recent debate Mike said that “when it came time for the state to scale testing we came to him to learn how to do it.” Oof! Not true– before COVIDCheck joined as a vendor my team and I had opened more than 50 testing sites across the state. Mike Johnston had nothing to do with this work. Period.

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I have said and will continue to say that COVIDCheck was a great organization. They did a ton of testing and, I think, delivered 3% of vaccines to individuals. But the problem here is not if COVIDCheck existed and did some testing, the problem is he misleads and exaggerates the extent, and that leads people to believe he was the state's testing response. And it's painful for him to do so because it erases and disrespects the public servants who actually did this work. The work my team and I did is orders of magnitude more complex, intense, high pressure, and innovative. It is heartbreaking and soul crushing to hear Mike Johnston take credit for this work and, in doing so, diminish, bury, and erase all of the exceptionally caring people I had the incredible honor of working with.

This is a classic tale of a powerful, white man lying and cheating to get power. Mike Johnston is taking credit for my work, and because he's a man, no one calls him on it. He looks the part, he has the money, and he says it, why not believe him?

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Should Mike Johnston make this ad mess about Kelly Brough, don't listen. This is about Mike Johnston's lies and exaggerations. It is about his lack of ethics and what that means in a role like Mayor. It's about Mike taking credit for my work and that of my team— about him trying to erase me, a regular woman who worked with hundreds of other regular people, with no power and nothing to gain (as so many male politicians have done before!).

Read the full post [here](#).

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Kelly Brough is not a politician and has never run for office, but she has the lived experience to understand the challenges facing Denver families and the executive experience to take action and make real, positive change. Her proven track record and experience as the Chief of Staff to former Mayor John Hickenlooper and first woman CEO of the Denver Chamber of Commerce has positioned her to successfully tackle Denver's biggest challenges like housing costs, homelessness, and public safety. Learn more about Kelly at <https://kellybrough.com/>.