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District 20.

## ARIZONA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

October 17, 2023

Dr. Robert C. Robbins, President  
University of Arizona  
Old Main, Room 200  
1200 East University Boulevard  
P.O. Box 210021  
Tucson, Arizona 85721-0021  
[president@email.arizona.edu](mailto:president@email.arizona.edu)

### **Subject: Preservation of the University of Arizona Cancer Center Chapel**

Dear President Robbins,

As the Arizona State Representative for District 20, I am writing this letter with a great sense of responsibility and a strong desire to protect our state's cultural and architectural legacy. I would like to draw your attention to the University of Arizona Cancer Center Chapel, a site of significant cultural and architectural value that requires immediate attention.

The Chapel at the University of Arizona Cancer Center is an outstanding example of the remarkable work of the renowned architect Paolo Soleri. As a cancer survivor, I believe many others, like me, consider this chapel a symbol of hope, peace, and comfort. It is truly remarkable that the University of Arizona has commissioned and carefully preserved this work for over 40 years, keeping it entirely intact. The chapel also holds immense cultural and architectural value as it embodies Soleri's innovative concepts and philosophical contributions to the preservation field.

As a practitioner in the field of Historic Preservation, I was both surprised and disappointed to learn that the University of Arizona plans to make destructive structural alterations to the chapel. The proposed plan involves removing pieces from the chapel and incorporating them into a new building, which poses a threat to the historical, architectural, and spiritual essence of this state-owned asset. It is disheartening to see places of significance to the community being destroyed, especially when there are so many other ways to preserve and honor our shared history.

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I sincerely hope it is not too late for me to request that the University of Arizona reconsider the proposed reconfiguration and initiate a collaborative dialogue with all stakeholders who hold a vested interest in preserving the historical and architectural icon of the chapel. Through such dialogue, alternative solutions can be found that will respect the chapel's rich heritage, maintain the integrity of the space, and honor the architectural legacy of our state. Such an effort would serve as a testament to responsible preservation and the lasting legacy of a visionary whose work has left an indelible mark on Arizona and the world.

I express my sincere gratitude for your attention to this matter and eagerly anticipate your response. Your support for the preservation of the University of Arizona Cancer Center Chapel is crucial for the benefit of our current and future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Betty Villegas".

Betty Villegas  
Arizona State Representative

CC:

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