# Republican Candidate Sparks Outrage with Homophobic Campaign Ad



**Missouri Candidate Faces Backlash Over Homophobic Campaign Ad**

**ST. LOUIS, MO** - **Valentina Gomez**, a 25-year-old Republican candidate for Missouri Secretary of State, has sparked controversy with a recent campaign video. Posted on May 12, 2024, the video features Gomez jogging through St. Louis’s Soulard district, addressing viewers with the phrase, "Don’t be weak and gay," before transitioning to an image of her holding firearms and wearing a National Rifle Association hat. Soulard is known for its significant LGBTQ+ community.

Gomez's remarks and visual choices drew swift condemnation online. Critics include Lupe Fiasco, whose song "The Show Goes On" was used without permission, and Jason Kander, a former Missouri Secretary of State and Army veteran, who mocked her for what he termed "veteran cosplay" and bigotry.

The incident is part of a pattern for Gomez, who has previously posted videos burning LGBTQ-themed books with a homemade flamethrower and made disparaging remarks about countries banning flamethrowers. Her campaign has garnered support from figures such as Representative Matt Gaetz, despite general backlash.

Gomez's campaign focuses on rhetoric against what she calls a corrupt state GOP and alleged voter fraud, positioning herself as a 2020 election denier aiming to abolish voting machines. Despite the controversy, she continues to advocate for what she describes as protecting and fighting for Missouri.