



State of Maine
House of Representatives
2 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0002

July 28, 2015

Government Oversight Committee
82 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04330-0082

Chairman Katz and Chairman Kruger,

A new and additional allegation of the Governor and his staff overstepping his executive authority by forcing the resignation of Jason Parent as President of the 2014 World Acadian Congress has recently been made public through various media sources. It has been alleged by Parent himself and members of the governing board of the World Acadian Congress that the Governor and others acting on his behalf pushed for the ouster of Parent under threat of withholding \$500,000 that the State Legislature had appropriated to support this celebration of Acadian culture in Maine and beyond.

Further, it is alleged that the reason for Governor LePage's desire to remove Parent, an extremely well-known and beloved mainstay of the Aroostook County community, is that then-Congressman Mike Michaud received a commemorative license plate before the Governor received his. The allegation is that Governor LePage and/or his staff were upset because it was widely known that Congressman Michaud might run against the Governor in the upcoming gubernatorial election. This makes the allegation all the more troubling because executive authority and taxpayer money were being used to punish and/or threaten an organization based entirely on electoral concerns. The potential impact on our electoral system and the public's trust in their government is chilling.

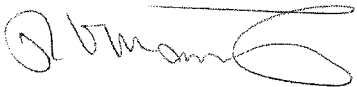
Parent did step down as President of the World Acadian Congress before the international event commenced. Clearly, some members of the governing board have either changed their story after having spoken to Bangor Daily News columnist Mike Tipping, or feel they were somehow misquoted. Parent and board member Ann Roy have remained consistent in their statements that Parent was pressured to resign in the face of this threat from the Governor and/or individuals working on his behalf.

Our request to OPEGA is as follows:

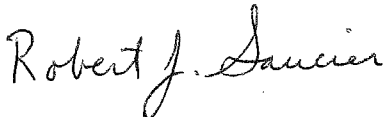
- 1) Outline an appropriate scope of investigation to reasonably determine whether allegations of political use of state resources are justified
- 2) The scope of this investigation is to include but not limited to:
 - a. Determining if the organizations involved with the 2014 World Acadian Congress were pressured in any way by the Governor, his staff or proxies to remove Jason Parent from his position by threatening to withhold state funds or through any other means.
 - b. Outline a full and accurate accounting of state funds and resources dedicated to the World Acadian Congress and a timeline on the release of those funds and resources as well as any changes to that timeline.
 - c. A review of any relevant communications between the Governor's Office, state agencies or other representatives of the Administration and the organizers of the World Acadian Congress regarding funding, resources or staffing of the organizations putting on the World of Acadian Congress.
 - d. Report any examples of improper or potentially inappropriate discretionary use of state resources.

This request is made with the intent of clarifying for the public and members of State Legislature what occurred and ensuring that taxpayer dollars are not being used to improperly influence or punish members of the public or institutions in order to influence elections. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Rep. Roland Danny Martin
House Chair, State and Local Government Committee



Rep. Robert J. Saucier
District 147