

*127th Legislature*  
*Senate of*  
*Maine*  
*Senate District 18*

*Senator John L. Patrick*  
*3 State House Station*  
*Augusta, ME 04333-0003*  
*(207) 287-1515*

October 24, 2016

Honorable Michael Thibodeau  
President of the Senate  
3 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear President Thibodeau,

It is a great honor to serve the people of Maine as a State Senator. As elected officials, we are held to a high standard for ethics and conduct inside and outside of the State House. The electorate's trust is essential for government to work well.

Our Legislative Code of Ethics states: "To work well, government requires a bond of trust and respect between citizens and their Legislators. With such a trust, high moral and ethical standards producing the public's confidence, with the reduction to a minimum of any conflict between private interests and official duties, should be observed."

Unfortunately, there has been a breach of this trust by two of our Senate colleagues.

Today, I request that you, as the President of the Senate, immediately convene the Senate Committee on Conduct and Ethics to investigate the potential fraud and misuse of taxpayer-funded legislative reimbursement funds by Senator Andre Cushing and Senator Ron Collins. If necessary, the committee should recommend sanctions for offenders and new safeguards to protect the legislative reimbursement program from the potential for abuse in the future.

I trust that you judge this to be as concerning as I and others do. The Maine Senate has a long reputation of holding its members to a high ethical standard and we must continue in this tradition.

If we value transparency and accountability, we have a personal responsibility to investigate the potential fraudulent use of these programs. If this situation does not warrant the investigation of the Senate Committee on Conduct and Ethics, I am not sure what would. We must ensure the people's trust in their Senate. Without it, we have failed them.

I look forward to your immediate attention and response to this severe situation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Patrick".

John Patrick  
State Senator

Cc: Hon. Justin Alford, Senate Democratic Leader  
Hon. Garrett Mason, Senate Republican Leader  
Hon. David Burns, Senate Committee on Conduct and Ethics, Chair  
Hon. Brian Langley, Senate Committee on Conduct and Ethics  
Hon. Ron Collins, Senate Committee on Conduct and Ethics  
Hon. Anne Haskell, Senate Committee on Conduct and Ethics  
Hon. Linda Valentino, Senate Committee on Conduct and Ethics