

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

## House Order, That the House Ethics Committee Conduct an Investigation

**WHEREAS**, each elected member of the Maine House of Representatives has signed the Legislative Code of Ethics; and

**WHEREAS**, the Legislative Code of Ethics clearly states: "No Maine Legislators will accept any employment that will impair their independence and integrity of judgment nor will they exercise their position of trust to secure unwarranted privileges for themselves or for others. The Maine Legislator will be ever mindful of the ordinary citizen who might otherwise be unrepresented and will endeavor conscientiously to pursue the highest standards of legislative conduct inside and outside of the State House."; and

**WHEREAS**, Representative Ryan Tipping of Orono served on the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs from January of 2015 through November of 2016; and

**WHEREAS**, while seeking reelection, Representative Tipping was paid at least \$9,000 beginning in May of 2016 by the Citizens Who Support Maine Public Schools, a political action committee that received funds from the Maine Education Association and National Education Association, over a period of 6 months to advocate for and actively campaign in support of the imposition of a significant tax increase on the Maine people and small businesses to provide additional funding for public education; and

**WHEREAS**, Representative Tipping publicly acknowledged his payment from the political action committee that was largely funded by the teachers unions was compensation for his "reaching out to elected officials" for the purpose of lobbying for the passage of the aforementioned policy initiative; and

**WHEREAS**, Representative Tipping's acceptance of payment from the teachers unions and subsequent lobbying work on behalf of the teachers unions while serving on the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs may be viewed as a conflict of interest; and

**WHEREAS**, Representative Tipping's appointment in January of 2017 as chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation, which is the committee of jurisdiction that will hear any bills that seek to alter or amend the tax increase for which Representative Tipping was paid to campaign, may constitute a serious conflict of interest and may also be a violation of the Legislative Code of Ethics; and

**WHEREAS**, Representative Tipping's ability to objectively consider legislation that will be presented in the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation, which he chairs, may be compromised; and

**WHEREAS**, questions concerning Representative Tipping's conduct threaten to cast a shadow over all of the work of the 128th Maine Legislature; and

**WHEREAS**, the integrity of the Maine House of Representatives is being called into question by the very people we represent; and

**WHEREAS**, the House Ethics Committee exists for the purposes for investigating potential violations of the Legislative Code of Ethics; now, therefore, be it

**ORDERED**, that the House Ethics Committee shall convene no later than March 30, 2017 to thoroughly investigate the actions of Representative Ryan Tipping and the potential violation of the Legislative Code of Ethics, and that, by April 30, 2017, the committee shall make such recommendations to the full House as it considers appropriate.