

From Queen's Park by Sylvia Jones MPP ? Those implicated in Sudbury bribery scandal should step aside

Chief Electoral Officer Greg Essensa released a report Feb. 19 called "on Apparent Contraventions of the Election Act." The report revealed that the Premier's Deputy Chief of Staff Patricia Sorbara and Chair of the Greater Sudbury Police Services Board Gerry Lougheed Jr. contravened the Election Act when they allegedly attempted to bribe former Liberal candidate Andrew Olivier to not run as the Liberal candidate in the recent Sudbury by-election.

There was already an OPP investigation into the Sudbury bribery scandal, and the OPP believe there was a violation of the criminal code. Now we have another investigation into this scandal. If laws were broken, someone must be held accountable for it. The Chief Electoral Officer in his report stated that "no Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario has ever conducted a regulatory investigation into allegations of bribery or ever reported an apparent contravention of the home statutes of my office to the Attorney General." The Chief Electoral Officer's report is unprecedented and must be respected by the Premier.

Since the release of the Chief Electoral Officer's report, almost every question by both opposition parties during Question Period has been on the Sudbury bribery scandal. I had the opportunity to question the Attorney General as to how she will assure Ontarians that the investigation will be dealt with quickly before evidence like emails and files are deleted and destroyed.

In addition, my PC colleagues and I have called on the Premier to remove Gerry Lougheed Jr. and Patricia Sorbara from their respective positions pending the results of the investigation. There are many past examples of police officers, teachers, and even former Ministers of the government who stepped away from their respective positions when there was an ongoing investigation. For example, former Finance Minister Greg Sorbara temporarily stepped down from his role when he was named in a search warrant. Patricia Sorbara and Gerry Lougheed Jr. must follow this standard and step down while this investigation is happening.

There are an unprecedented four investigations into this government. Not including the above mentioned investigation, there are three police investigations plaguing this Liberal government, which includes the OPP investigation into Ornge, the OPP investigation into the deletion of emails pertaining to the decision to cancel the Mississauga and Oakville gas plants, and the OPP investigation into the Sudbury bribery scandal.

