

REPRESENTATIVE
JOHN COGHILL
HOUSE RULES
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

During Interim: (June-Dec.)
3340 Badger Road
Suite 290
North Pole, Alaska 99705
(907) 488-5725
Fax (907) 488-4271

Alaska State Legislature



DISTRICT 11

During Session: (Jan.-May)
State Capitol, Room 214
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
(907) 465-3719
Fax (907) 465-3258
1-877-465-3719

House of Representatives

September 5, 2008

Senator Kim Elton, Chairman
Alaska Legislative Council
State Capitol, Room 506
Juneau, AK 997801-2133

Dear Senator Elton:

On September 2, in an interview with ABCnews.com, Sen. Hollis French was quoted as stating that the Legislative Council report was going to be an "October surprise." He was further quoted as stating that the report was "likely to be damaging to the administration," that the Governor "had a credibility problem" and that "If she was involved [in allegedly obtaining confidential information], it would be a violation of state law." He was also quoted stating that "If they had done their job they never would have picked her," "Now they may have to deal with an October surprise."

These statements cause me to think that the report is already written even though the investigation is only just begun and the most important witnesses have not even been interviewed. The investigation appears to be lacking in fairness, neutrality and due process.

For the second time now, Sen. French has stated publicly that the report is somehow involved in potential impeachment of the Governor, this time stating that "the report is a preliminary step prior to any effort to impeach the Governor."

With all due respect to Sen. French, none of these statements reflect the goals of the Legislative Council in initiating the investigation. The Council's motion specifically stated that "It is the intent of the Legislative Council that the investigation be professional, unbiased, independent, objective, and conducted at arm's length from the political process."


It was further the intent of the Legislative Council to have the investigator issue a report only "in a timely manner." There never was any goal of having the report issue on October 31, 2008 or any other specific date. In fact, this date, on the eve of the election, would seem inconsistent with the stated goal of an arm's length apolitical investigation.

Sen. French's public statements regarding "October surprises," his indication that the report's conclusion has already been written, and his comments implying that he has undisclosed information that would make the Governor unfit to be the nominee for Vice-President of the United States all are direct contrast with the goals of professionalism, lack of bias, and an apolitical investigation. Sen. French appears to be steering the direction of the investigation, its conclusion, and its timing in a manner that will have maximum partisan political impact on the national and state elections.

It is therefore with deep regret that I must state that I no longer have confidence in Sen. French to continue to independently serve as the Project Director of this investigation.

I would ask that you convene the Legislative Council to discuss the politicized nature of Senator French's public comments concerning this investigation, the findings of the investigation to date, and whether the investigation and expenditure of public funds should continue under a new, apolitical, director in light of the parallel pending personnel board investigation. If the Legislative Council decides to continue the investigation, I strongly recommend Senator French step down as Project Director.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Coghill". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large loop at the end.

Representative John Coghill, Committee Member
Legislative Council