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**Sent:** Tuesday, May 23, 2023 11:10 AM

**To:** Martin LaLonde <[MLaLonde@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:MLaLonde@leg.state.vt.us)>; Mike Donoghue <[mdonoghue@smcvt.edu](mailto:mdonoghue@smcvt.edu)>

**Subject:** [External] URGENT: Important message from the Vermont Press Association

Rep. Martin Lalonde  
Chair, Impeachment Committee  
Vermont Statehouse  
Montpelier, Vermont

Dear Martin,

Good chatting as always.

On behalf of the Vermont Press Association, the Executive Board does wish to object to any effort to exclude the public, including the press, from any hearings involving the Franklin County Impeachment Study Committee that you are chairing.

The possible removal of two high-level elected county officials is an important public issue, especially when voters have put the two targets into office.

The Vermont Legislature has a longstanding tradition of conducting its business in the open and we hope it will continue.

The names of the specific witnesses are public record. They also are well known in Franklin County. Some have even spoken about their involvement

in the case. There is no need for your committee to go behind closed doors without a serious documented reason that goes beyond a simple wish.

We have heard your work possibly compared to a grand jury. That appears to be a poor analogy. Your committee, our understanding, has not been given the task of filing charges. It will determine if the case needs further review.

Witnesses are thrown into cases against their will all the time and they speak in public. In the Franklin County cases the witnesses had the option to participate or not, knowing the case and their statements would likely become public.

We believe any rules adopted by your committee should reflect transparency.

The VPA is prepared to help with a public process. We hope to be in contact with you as the hearings proceed.

Thanks very much.

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