



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Ortt Requests Answers from Governor, Senate

ROBERT G. ORTT February 11, 2020

| ISSUE: **SENATE COMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS**

Lockport, NY --- Recently, Senator Rob Ortt (R,C,I,Ref-North Tonawanda) issued an inquiry into the New York State Police's involvement in a recent lobbying investigation. An article published by the Times Union calls into question the New York State Police's involvement in preventing a flight carrying a banner criticizing the state's ethics committee from taking off at the South Albany Airport.

"It is my hope that our highly-esteemed state police are not being weaponized to stifle free speech," said Sen. Ortt. "It is clear that the agreement between Ms. Sullivan and the South Albany Airport was impacted due to a call between state police and the owner of the airport. Ms. Sullivan and the public have a right to know if their tax dollars and the honorable men and women of the state police are being used in an inappropriate manner. It is my hope that the Chair of the Senate Committee on Investigations, who has claimed he would use his committee in a bipartisan manner, will help provide key answers to these troubling reports," said Ortt.

Sen. Ortt has issued a formal request to the Committee Chairman, Sen. Skoufis, to investigate these claims and to provide the public with any answers that are found to the following questions;

1. Why did the South Albany Airport owner feel he needed to cancel Ms. Sullivan's December flight to "preserve his relationship" with NYSP? In communications with the South Albany Airport, did NYSP indicate that allowing Ms. Sullivan's political messaging would damage the relationship between NYSP and the Airport?
2. What was the real purpose of NYSP's communications with the Airport – assisting JCOPE's inquiry, or policing the content of Ms. Sullivan's advocacy?
3. To what extent were Governor Cuomo or top NYSP officials involved in these communications or related decision-making?

Last fall, Sen. Skoufis refused to launch an inquiry into concerns that the governor and JCOPE had illegally worked together to influence an investigation regarding Gov. Cuomo confidant Joseph Percoco.

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