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**THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK**



**ROBERT G. ORTT**  
**SENATOR, 62<sup>ND</sup> DISTRICT**

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November 15, 2019

Senator James Skoufis  
Chairman, Senate Committee on Investigations  
Legislative Office Building, Room 815  
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Chairman Skoufis:

I am writing to request a formal investigation by your committee into recent allegations that the Joint Committee on Public Ethics (JCOPE) may have illegally disclosed details of its deliberations regarding Joseph Percoco to Governor Andrew Cuomo.

As reported by the Albany Times Union, Ms. Julie Garcia was appointed to JCOPE by Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie. Allegedly, immediately following a contentious (and, by law, confidential) vote to investigate Cuomo confidant Joseph Percoco, Governor Cuomo contacted Assembly Speaker Heastie to express his frustration with how Ms. Garcia, the Speaker's appointee, voted. The Speaker's staff then contacted Ms. Garcia to express disappointment, which prompted her to contact the Inspector General's office.

As you know, JCOPE is specifically designed to be an independent oversight body tasked with rooting out corruption in a state with a long history of it. The allegation that the Governor may have violated JCOPE's confidentiality bylaws in order to strongarm JCOPE members investigating his former top aide is a threat to our state government, and should be investigated accordingly.

Giving these allegations a complete and thorough investigation is a necessary step to block corruption and, at the very least, help restore public trust in Albany. I urge your Committee to launch an investigation into these allegations as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Robert G. Ort".

Robert G. Ort  
Senator, 62<sup>nd</sup> District