



Big Sky Country
MONTANA STATE LEGISLATURE

October 21, 2021

Dear President Blasdel and Speaker Galt:

Recent reporting at the *Helena Independent Record* has brought to light a disturbing series of actions on the part of Attorney General Austin Knudsen and his use of state law enforcement resources at the Montana Department of Justice to harass physicians, staff, and other officials at St. Peter's Hospital in Helena.

As chief law enforcement officer of the state, the Attorney General holds an office of incredible authority and public trust. Accordingly, Montanans expect that whoever holds that office will conduct themselves with impeccable judgment and impartiality. The reporting in the *Independent Record* raises serious questions if Attorney General Knudsen can meet those standards and whether he is abusing the powers of his office to further his personal agenda. The articles also indicate that other public officials may be involved in this matter.

As a co-equal branch of government, the Legislature has a duty to perform oversight of Executive Branch officials and agencies, especially when there are questions of impropriety and abuse of power. **Therefore, we ask that you take immediate action to begin a probe into the incidents at St. Peter's Hospital, the actions of the Attorney General, and the involvement of any other public officials or employees.**

Specifically, we ask that you assign the special counsel established in 5-5-110 MCA with the authority to "examine state governmental activities and [...] examine and inspect all records, books, and files of any department, agency, commission, board, or institution of the state of Montana" to perform this investigation.

We look forward to your prompt response to this request.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Jill Cohenour in black ink.

JILL COHENOUR
Senate Minority Leader

Handwritten signature of Kim Abbott in blue ink.

KIM ABBOTT
House Minority Leader