

Written by Kathy
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COLUMBUS – Ohio Senate Democratic Leader Nickie J. Antonio (D-Lakewood) and House Minority Leader Allison Russo (D-Upper Arlington) announced Thursday that they have sent a letter to the United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio requesting assistance from U.S. Attorney Kenneth Parker in the ongoing House Bill (H.B.) 6 political corruption scandal.

The letter sent to U.S. Attorney Parker can be viewed [here](#) . The request comes after recent [news reports](#) reveal, according to Antonio and Russo, that officials at the highest level of Gov Mike DeWine's administration failed to act in the taxpayer's interest when given evidence of proven or potential criminal activity relative to the FirstEnergy scandal that drew a 20 year prison sentence for former House speaker Larry Householder. He was convicted of taking part in stealing \$60 million in the scam that taxpayers paid for with higher energy bills. HB6 is now defunct partly, and following the fallout as indictments continue to come down.

A former U.S. senator, DeWine, a Republican and a two-term governor, is among ranking Republicans, also including state Attorney General Dave Yost and Lt Gov. Jon Husted, under fire from Democratic state lawmakers who are in the minority in both the state House of Representatives and Senate.

The governor has said that he did not predict the scandal, which was obviously unconvincing to some Democratic lawmakers. Recent reports seem to suggest an administrative culture that willingly ignored potential criminal activity within the administration itself, or within proximity to it," wrote Leaders Antonio and Russo

. "Though the AG's efforts are laudable, we believe the office does not possess the capacity to detach itself from the political realities of Ohio's control of state government...The latest news reports highlight additional issues within government that only your office in its objective position and resources could investigate."

The state legislators also expressed their concern that the DeWine-Husted administration has

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failed to endorse or propose reforms to prevent future corruption within the administration or those who follow.

"While we are doing all we can as Ohio state legislators serving in the minority, we continue to have no support from the administration on our proposed needed reforms to ban corrupt practices and undo the economic damage that corruption has inflicted on our constituents, the Leaders

continued in the letter.

"We respectfully ask for your assistance in investigating questionable practices and circumstances at the highest levels of state government to once and for all root out corruption that continues to cost Ohio taxpayers,"

At a [news conference](#) Thursday where the request to the U.S. Justice Department was announced,

Leaders Antonio

and

Russo

went into greater detail about their concerns over AG Yost's investigation.

"As elected officials, we have a duty to act in the best interest of Ohioans, and that includes enacting legislation to reestablish integrity in our legislature," said Leader Antonio, who's district includes 14 of Cleveland's 17 wards

"The Republican-led legislature failed Ohioans when House Bill 6 was passed and the Republican majority continues to fail Ohioans by not taking action to fully repeal House Bill 6, protect Ohio consumers and end the corruption tax."

Russo added that she believes the system is broken.

"There are simply too many unanswered questions and frankly the state alone— the very system that manifested this corruption— does not possess the capacity nor resources to detach itself from political realities of Ohio's control of state government," said Leader Russo. "It's time we finally close this dark chapter in Ohio's history, undo the economic damage of corruption to Ohioans, and ensure corruption is never commonplace in our state government— no matter who is in charge."

Antonio and Russo said that despite these crimes and the economic impact to Ohio families, small businesses and consumers, not one reform has been passed in the last five years that would prevent another H.B.6 scandal from happening again. Clevelandurbannews.com and

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