

November 16, 2011

The Honorable Thom Tillis  
Speaker of the House  
North Carolina General Assembly  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601

Dear Speaker Tillis:

Several recent media reports have raised questions about the business practices of our colleague Rep. Stephen LaRoque. The reports appear to point to a pattern of violating several guidelines for nonprofits as well as the rules for the U.S. Department of Agriculture loan program that provides the capital for Rep. LaRoque's business.

I understand that you and your staff are monitoring this matter and I appreciate your attention. However, I believe the House of Representatives and the public deserve a fuller examination of the allegations made against Rep. LaRoque. I am asking that you appoint a bipartisan commission to independently review the matter and make recommendations about the best course of action in this case. The leadership of this commission should also be bipartisan -- as is the leadership of our Ethics Committee -- to assure the public that political gamesmanship is not a factor in this review.

No member of the House of Representatives should be exempt from the laws and regulations of our government. In fact, we should hold the members of our chamber to a higher standard of behavior to help build public faith in government. An open, bipartisan review of the allegations against Rep. LaRoque best serves the people of North Carolina and our fellow House members.

I would be pleased to consult with you about the membership, duties and procedures for this proposed committee and I hope we will discuss this matter soon.

Thank you for your serious consideration of my request and please let me know if I can be of any assistance to you as you move forward.

Very truly yours,

Joe Hackney