



City of Biddeford, Maine

Alan M. Casavant
Mayor

Senator David Dutremble
3 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

May 7, 2015

Dear Senator Dutremble,

To my knowledge, as of today you have not officially contacted the City of Biddeford in regard to the Attorney General's ongoing investigation of sexual abuse allegations that have been in the news, and that were the subject of significant public comment during the Biddeford City Council meeting on Tuesday, May 5th. If you have contacted the City in an official capacity, and somehow I was not informed, I apologize.

The Council and I are aware that you have been commenting about the issue on social media, and your concern is very evident in your comments to the Portland Press Herald, as reported on May 7, 2015. The Council and I have been gratified to learn of your interest in these very serious issues, and I want to assure you that the City is doing everything it can, within the current and very clear constraints of Maine law, to make sure these matters are investigated thoroughly. We strongly believe that any criminal activity should be prosecuted to the fullest extent by the proper authorities, and we are resolute in our commitment that justice is served.

Recognizing that you are Biddeford's highest-ranking state legislator, we are hopeful that your strong and capable leadership can have an immediate and positive impact on our ability to address the very legitimate concerns being expressed by your constituents and by our constituents in many public forums. On Tuesday, after listening to public comment, the Council acted swiftly and decisively to pass two important resolutions in regard to state legislation. I am appending the minutes of the Municipal Officers Meeting to this letter, but in summary, very soon the City of Biddeford will officially request your assistance to:

- File legislation modifying state Title 16, which prohibits City officials from commenting publicly about ongoing criminal investigations.
- File legislation prohibiting, throughout Maine, any registered sex offender from living within 750 feet of any school or municipally-owned public park or playground.

205 Main Street • P.O. Box 586 • Biddeford, Maine 04005 • (207) 286-9385
acasavant@biddefordmaine.org


In addition, Senator, given the strongly-stated wish by many that action on these matters indeed be decisive and swift, the City will ask that you file these bills as *emergency legislation*. Given the extraordinary nature of the present situation, we suggest that the emergency designation is entirely appropriate, and we will ask your Legislative leaders to give every consideration to allowing you to file legislation under that designation. Leadership is copied to this letter, as are the Governor, the Attorney General, and our local legislative delegation.

For its own part, the City is acting in concert with what we will be asking of our State Senator. As you can see from the enclosed minutes, the Council has directed its city attorney to draft a city ordinance prohibiting any registered sex offender from living within 750 feet of any school or municipally-owned public park or playground. I assure you that the Council and I wish to see this passed as soon as possible.

We strongly believe that parallel state legislation is absolutely necessary, so that Biddeford is not one of only a handful of municipalities in the area that enforces this standard. Public input has been valuable, voluminous, persuasive, and in our opinion, correct: the current standard is too lax. Needless to say, encouraging registered sex offenders to move to municipalities with a more relaxed standard would ultimately be unproductive. That is why --- in fairness to the rest of the state --- we are asking you to join us in trying to pass new, emergency legislation. The same tough standard should apply in every municipality.

The Council and I look forward to working with you, Senator Dutremble, as well as with the Maine Legislature and Governor LePage, to effect these timely and necessary measures. The citizens of Biddeford are fortunate to have the benefit of your leadership. We thank you for stepping forward to voice your concerns, we share those concerns very deeply, and we eagerly anticipate working together to achieve a correct and just outcome.

Sincerely,



Alan Casavant
Mayor

Cc: Hon. Paul R. LePage, Governor of Maine
Hon. Janet T. Mills, Attorney General, State of Maine
Sen. Michael D. Thibodeau, President, Maine Senate
Rep. Mark Eves, Speaker, Maine House of Representatives