



Ryan michaels <rtgmich@gmail.com>

Request for Clear Procedural Guidance Regarding OPEGA Review

9 messages

Ryan michaels <rtgmich@gmail.com>
Reply-To: rtgmich@gmail.com
To: "Schleck, Peter" <Peter.Schleck@legislature.maine.gov>
Cc: Trey Stewart <trey@treystewart.com>

Mon, Feb 2, 2026 at 12:58 PM

Dear Mr. Schleck,

I am writing again with respect for the process OPEGA has outlined and with the intention of moving forward in a constructive, transparent, and procedurally sound way.

As I understand it, a legislator's sponsorship is required for OPEGA to formally initiate an investigation. I want to be clear that I have been actively seeking that sponsorship for some time. However, given the seriousness of the issues involved—and to ensure that I do not misstate or oversimplify the process—I am writing to ask for your direct guidance.

For clarity's sake, I have CC'd Senator Trey Stewart on this email. My goal in doing so is not to place any burden or expectation on him, but rather to ensure that any legislator who may be willing to help has a clear, accurate, and easy-to-understand explanation of what is actually required.

Mr. Schleck, would you mind outlining—plainly and specifically—what steps a legislator would need to take in order to request or sponsor OPEGA's review? In particular:

1. What does sponsorship require in practice?
2. Does it involve endorsing allegations, or simply requesting an independent review?
3. Are there specific forms, language, or thresholds that must be met?

I believe this clarity is critical, not just for my own understanding, but so that I do not inadvertently explain the process incorrectly to a legislator who may otherwise be willing to assist.

I also want to reiterate, for the record, that the concerns I am raising are not solely personal. They are reflected in news coverage across the state, minutes and recordings of government oversight committee meetings, public testimony from other affected families, and records and correspondence generated by DHHS itself. While my circumstances have made my case more visible, I am simply carrying a story that extends far beyond my family.

At the same time, the situation has become increasingly urgent. I am a 100% disabled and currently unemployed individual, yet I am facing impending actions by DHHS that include over \$45,000 in alleged child support arrears for children I have been prevented from seeing or communicating with due to the Department's own misconduct, an expectation of approximately \$3,000 per month in ongoing support, and a separate \$50,000 invoice for access to my own records following a lawful public records request. Taken together—particularly in the context of my long-standing whistleblowing regarding this agency—these actions raise serious concerns about proportionality, retaliation, and the silencing of accountability.

I am not asking for conclusions to be drawn in advance. I am asking for truth and transparency through due process and an unbiased investigation, so that all involved—families, legislators, and the State itself—can move forward based on facts rather than fear.

Thank you for your time and for any clarity you can provide. I remain ready to supply documentation or answer questions as needed.

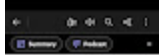
Respectfully,

Ryan Michaels
Berwick, Maine
100% *disabled* veteran
100% *unemployed*
100% *in need of help*

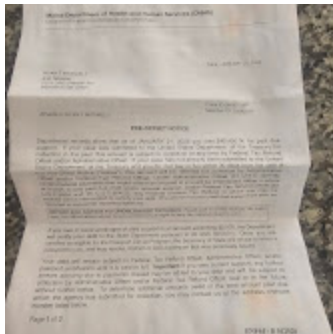
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Ryan michaels <rtgmich@gmail.com>
Reply-To: rtgmich@gmail.com
To: betseygrant1@icloud.com

Mon, Feb 2, 2026 at 1:04 PM

Fyi
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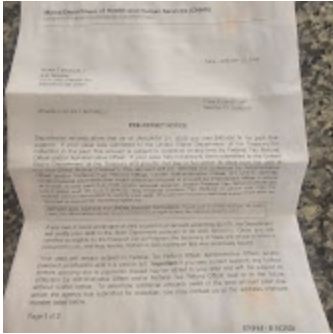
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Schleck, Peter <Peter.Schleck@legislature.maine.gov>
To: "rtgmich@gmail.com" <rtgmich@gmail.com>
Cc: Trey Stewart <trey@treystewart.com>

Mon, Feb 2, 2026 at 3:03 PM

Mr. Michaels,

Thank you for the follow up. I am happy to share again the process, which may be found on OPEGA's web page:

[Request for a Review | Maine State Legislature](#)

Thank you again, kindly, for the opportunity to be of assistance.

Peter Schleck | Director

Office of Program Evaluation & Government Accountability

Maine State Legislature

peter.schleck@legislature.maine.gov

(207) 287-1903 | 82 SHS, Augusta, ME 04333

[http://legislature.maine.gov/opegal/](http://legislature.maine.gov/opegal)

From: Ryan michaels <rtgmich@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 2, 2026 12:58 PM
To: Schleck, Peter <Peter.Schleck@legislature.maine.gov>

Cc: Trey Stewart <trey@treystewart.com>

Subject: Request for Clear Procedural Guidance Regarding OPEGA Review

This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.

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Ryan Michaels <rtgmich@gmail.com>
Reply-To: rtgmich@gmail.com
To: Trey Stewart <trey@treystewart.com>
Cc: "Schleck, Peter" <Peter.Schleck@legislature.maine.gov>

Tue, Feb 3, 2026 at 10:00 AM

Senator Stewart,

I am writing to you directly and formally to request your sponsorship of an Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability (OPEGA) review, consistent with OPEGA's governing procedures and legislative framework.

I have CC'd Mr. Peter Schleck, Director of OPEGA, to ensure procedural accuracy and transparency regarding the process, and to avoid any misstatement of what sponsorship entails.

As Mr. Schleck has confirmed, OPEGA may initiate a review upon request or sponsorship by a legislator. Importantly, sponsorship does **not** require endorsing allegations or reaching conclusions in advance — it is a request for an independent, fact-based review so that the Legislature, affected families, and the public may rely on verified findings rather than unresolved disputes or agency narratives.

I am therefore requesting that you sponsor an OPEGA review into the Department's handling of administrative appeals and related procedural actions, including—but not limited to—the administrative hold placed on OCFS investigative appeals, the lack of notice to affected parents, and the resulting due-process implications.

For clarity and completeness, I have attached the following materials to support this request and to create a clean record:

- **Request for Clear Procedural Guidance Regarding OPEGA Review** (email correspondence outlining the statutory process and need for sponsorship);
- **Chronological Summary of Exhibits and Their Relevance**, which organizes contemporaneous records demonstrating Department-caused delay, deflection, and procedural prejudice;
- **Exhibits A–G**, documenting repeated unanswered due-process questions, Department-initiated continuances, late disclosures, and licensing-complaint extensions that materially prejudiced my administrative appeal.

These materials are not offered to ask you to reach conclusions, but to demonstrate that the request meets the threshold for an independent review and raises issues of statewide significance affecting families beyond my own.

Respectfully, I am asking you to do one of the following:

1. Confirm that you will sponsor this request for OPEGA review; or
2. If you decline, advise me clearly so that the record accurately reflects that sponsorship was formally requested and considered.

I appreciate your time and your service, and I am grateful for any assistance you are willing to provide in ensuring transparency, accountability, and public confidence in state systems that exercise extraordinary power over families.

Respectfully,

Ryan Michaels
Berwick, Maine
100% disabled veteran
Pro se appellant

CC:
Peter Schleck, Director



ExhibitF_LicensingComplaintExtensions_PrejudicingAppeal_9-23-2025.png
197K



Schleck, Peter <Peter.Schleck@legislature.maine.gov>
To: "rtgmich@gmail.com" <rtgmich@gmail.com>, Trey Stewart <trey@treystewart.com>

Tue, Feb 3, 2026 at 10:55 AM

Mr. Michaels,

I regret to advise that you have not quite stated the process correctly. Importantly, and for example, legislator sponsorship is a first step. The Government Oversight Committee must later vote to direct that OPEGA undertake work on its behalf.

That said, any legislator who is considering sponsoring a request to the Government Oversight Committee may contact me directly, or have their staff do so, if there are clarifying questions in need of an answer.

Thank you, kindly.

Peter Schleck | Director
Office of Program Evaluation & Government Accountability
Maine State Legislature
peter.schleck@legislature.maine.gov
(207) 287-1903 | 82 SHS, Augusta, ME 04333
<http://legislature.maine.gov/opegal>

From: Ryan michaels <rtgmich@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 3, 2026 10:01 AM
To: Trey Stewart <trey@treystewart.com>
Cc: Schleck, Peter <Peter.Schleck@legislature.maine.gov>
Subject: Re: Request for Clear Procedural Guidance Regarding OPEGA Review

ALERT The content of this email looks suspicious and it may be a phishing attempt. Be careful with this email unless you know it is safe. Powered by CyberSentriq.

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Ryan michaels <rtgmich@gmail.com>
Reply-To: rtgmich@gmail.com
To: Trey Stewart <trey@treystewart.com>
Cc: "Schleck, Peter" <Peter.Schleck@legislature.maine.gov>

Tue, Feb 3, 2026 at 12:01 PM

Senator Stewart,

Thank you for remaining copied on this thread, and thank you as well to Mr. Schleck for the additional clarification regarding the role of the Government Oversight Committee following any initial legislator request.

I want to be very clear and respectful of that distinction.

My intent in reaching out to you is **not** to ask you to prejudge facts, endorse allegations, or commit the Committee to any particular outcome. Rather, it is to ask whether you would be willing to take — or authorize your staff to take — the *procedural first step* of engaging with OPEGA to determine whether a request should be brought forward to the Government Oversight Committee for its consideration.

As Mr. Schleck noted, legislators who are contemplating this step may contact him directly for clarification. At this stage, that limited engagement alone would be meaningful, as it would allow an informed determination about whether the issues raised meet the threshold for Committee review — or whether there are other appropriate avenues I should be pursuing instead.

I fully understand the constraints and responsibilities of your role, and I want to proceed in a way that is accurate, fair, and respectful of the legislative process. If you are willing to take that initial procedural step, I would be grateful. If not, I would appreciate knowing that as well so I can adjust accordingly and keep the record clear.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Ryan Michaels
100% Disabled Veteran
Berwick, Maine 03901

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Trey Stewart <trey@treystewart.com>
To: rtgmich@gmail.com
Cc: "Schleck, Peter" <Peter.Schleck@legislature.maine.gov>, "Priest, Heather" <Heather.Priest@legislature.maine.gov>, "Slavin, Craig" <craig.slavin@legislature.maine.gov>

Wed, Feb 4, 2026 at 10:13 AM

Mr. Schleck,

Thank you for your response. I want to clarify a couple of things on my end here as a legislator being asked to sponsor this request.

- 1) Does the request need to come from a member of the GOC committee?
- 2) What format does the request take the shape of? Is this a bill that must be introduced, or something else?
- 3) Once the request is made, what is the timeline for when the GOC must schedule a hearing on the matter and what is the sponsoring legislator's role in that process?

Looping in my staff on this email as well. Thanks for your help!

Best,
Trey

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Sen. Harold "Trey" Stewart III

Maine State Senator, District #2
(Southern Aroostook and Northern Penobscot)

Schleck, Peter <Peter.Schleck@legislature.maine.gov>

Wed, Feb 4, 2026 at 12:06 PM

To: Trey Stewart <trey@treystewart.com>

Cc: "Priest, Heather" <Heather.Priest@legislature.maine.gov>, "Slavin, Craig" <Craig.Slavin@legislature.maine.gov>, "rtgmich@gmail.com" <rtgmich@gmail.com>

Senator Stewart,

Thank you for your note and the opportunity to be of assistance.

1. The request can be from any current Maine state legislator, including but not limited to one or more GOC members.
2. For a request from a legislator, the format can simply be an official letter to the GOC Chairs. It is always appreciated if the Member can share any insight (in the letter or in attachments) in response to the questions which may be found on the following form available on OPEGA's website (the person requesting your "sponsorship" may or may not be invited to contribute answers, as needed or desired, if you find that helpful—in many cases this will help the legislator also evaluate the merits of sponsorship:

[OPEGA Request Form](#)

3. Upon receipt, efforts are made to schedule the request for presentation and consideration at the next or subsequent available GOC meeting, with the GOC meeting twice per month during session (second and fourth Fridays). So, a letter received by the end of next week could realistically be added to the agenda for the February 27th or the March 13th meeting, barring unforeseen circumstances. The protocol then has the legislator invited to the meeting (so there can be adjustments in scheduling to accommodate competing obligations), the legislator presents the request at the witness table, and then the legislator entertains any questions the Committee may have. The Committee may vote at the same or a subsequent meeting to direct that OPEGA review the matter, or that it be referred to another committee, or that additional questions be asked of a responsible agency, or that no further action be taken. It is required that seven of 12 GOC members vote in the affirmative to launch any OPEGA work.

Thank you, again, kindly, and I welcome any additional opportunities to be of assistance.

Peter Schleck | Director

Office of Program Evaluation & Government Accountability

Maine State Legislature

peter.schleck@legislature.maine.gov

(207) 287-1903 | 82 SHS, Augusta, ME 04333

<http://legislature.maine.gov/opega/>

From: Trey Stewart <trey@treystewart.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 4, 2026 10:13 AM
To: rtgmich@gmail.com
Cc: Schleck, Peter <Peter.Schleck@legislature.maine.gov>; Priest, Heather <Heather.Priest@legislature.maine.gov>; Slavin, Craig <Craig.Slavin@legislature.maine.gov>
Subject: Re: Request for Clear Procedural Guidance Regarding OPEGA Review

This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.

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Ryan michaels <rtgmich@gmail.com> Sun, Jun 21, 2026 at 8:00 AM
Reply-To: rtgmich@gmail.com
To: "Schleck, Peter" <Peter.Schleck@legislature.maine.gov>
Cc: Trey Stewart <trey@treystewart.com>, "Priest, Heather" <Heather.Priest@legislature.maine.gov>, "Slavin, Craig" <Craig.Slavin@legislature.maine.gov>

Senator Stewart,

I hope you are doing well.

I wanted to briefly follow up regarding my request for OPEGA sponsorship and the correspondence earlier this year with Mr. Schleck regarding the review process.

I appreciate the time you took to seek clarification from OPEGA and to better understand the procedure before making a determination. Since then, I have not received any update and wanted to respectfully ask whether you have reached a decision regarding sponsorship of the request.

The concerns that led me to seek an independent review remain unresolved, and recent events have only reinforced my belief that an objective examination of these issues would serve the interests of transparency, accountability, and public confidence.

As a father who continues to navigate the consequences of these unresolved matters, Father's Day serves as a reminder of why this issue remains so important to me. My request has never been for anyone to accept my conclusions, only for an independent review of the facts and the processes involved.

I am reminded of Micah 6:8: "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" That principle is ultimately all I am seeking here—a fair review of the facts, accountability where warranted, and confidence that the systems entrusted with serving Maine families are operating as intended.

Whenever you have an opportunity, I would greatly appreciate any update regarding your decision or any guidance on next steps.

Thank you again for your time, your service, and your consideration.

Respectfully,

Ryan Michaels
Berwick, Maine
100% Disabled Veteran

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