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State Administration and Veterans' Affairs Interim Committee

65th Montana Legislature

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November 1, 2018

Corey Stapleton
Montana Secretary of State
Capitol Building, Rm 260
P.O. Box 202801
Helena, MT 59620-2801

Re: Request for you to address our committee Nov. 13

Dear Secretary Stapleton:

As you know, the State Administration and Veterans' Affairs Interim Committee has the statutory duty and obligation to monitor the activities of the Secretary of State's Office. Concerns were recently raised that contracts and costs incurred by your office were inappropriate.

A Billings Gazette editorial published October 31,* noted errors in the 2018 Voter Information Pamphlet published by your office. An addendum was required. The editorial questioned the addendum printing contract, which was not awarded to the lowest bidder. The total cost for preparing, printing, and mailing the addendum was \$265,000. Spending money to hire an outside defense attorney rather than using normal agency procedure to use the expertise of a Montana Department of Justice attorney in a lawsuit concerning the Green Party was also questioned. The outside attorney cost your office an additional \$60,000.

These concerns compel me to request you address our committee Nov. 13 and respond to the concerns articulated. Montanans have a right to know that their elections and the office primarily responsible for overseeing local elections is being diligently managed.

Pursuant to this request, the committee's agenda has been revised to provide for your address at the beginning of the meeting. (See the attached agenda.) We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Senator Sue Malek".

Sen. Sue Malek, Presiding Officer
State Administration and Veterans' Affairs Interim Committee

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*https://billingsgazette.com/opinion/editorial/gazette-opinion-something-s-not-right-in-montana-sos-office/article_db83bdac-81f3-57c5-b4bd-30a558d037f0.html