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Ethics Commission Confirms Full-Scale Investigation into Top Elected Officials

LITTLE ROCK, AR – ArkLeg Bill Tracker, the nascent but formidable investigative policy analysis platform, today released definitive proof that its sweeping ethics complaints have triggered a major state investigation. Official letters from Arkansas Ethics Commission Director Graham Sloan confirm the Commission has opened a formal investigation into all 10 ethics complaints filed by ArkLeg Bill Tracker on Sept. 19.

Not a single allegation was dismissed.

The complaints allege a complex network of violations by Attorney General Tim Griffin, Rep. David Ray, Sen. Ben Gilmore, and associated PACs, including illegal excessive contributions, money laundering, and unlawful payments to a sitting legislator.

Complaints were also filed against Lt. Gov. Leslie Rutledge, Secretary of State Cole Jester, and Association of Arkansas Counties (AAC) Executive Director Chris Villines.

When filed, some of the officials responded with a coordinated chorus of denial, calling the complaints “frivolous,” “deeply unserious,” and “not worth the paper it’s written on.”

“The Commission’s letters are worth the paper they’re printed on, and they say something very different,” said Scott Perkins, AP award-winning editor and co-founder.

“The Commission’s decision to investigate all 10 complaints is a vindication of our work and a disregard of the political spin machine,” said Janie Ginocchio, MPA, an I.F. Stone Award-winning investigative reporter and co-founder of ArkLeg Bill Tracker. “We presented evidence; they offered insults. The Commission, by opening a full-scale investigation, has made it clear which one carries weight.”



The organization continues its investigation and will submit supplemental evidence and newly discovered violations to the commission.

“To the officials who doubted our knowledge of Arkansas law: the state’s own Ethics Commission disagrees with you,” said Perkins, a former lobbyist and legislative director for the AAC. “We may be a new voice, but our work is built on a foundation of their own signed documents and old-school, shoe-leather reporting. This is just the beginning.”

The next step is for the Commission’s staff to determine through its investigation if there is probable cause that violations occurred.

Copies of the letters are available here: <https://tinyurl.com/arethicscomplaints>.

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About ArkLeg Bill Tracker:

ArkLeg Bill Tracker is a citizen-powered platform built to promote transparency and engagement in Arkansas state government. We cut through the complexity of the legislative process, providing straightforward tracking of bills that affect the lives of Arkansans. We go beyond tracking to deliver expert, citizen-focused public policy analysis and groundbreaking investigative reporting on public corruption, because an informed public is the strongest check on power. Learn more at www.arklegbilltracker.com.