



STATE OF MAINE  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
1 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE  
04333-0001

Paul R. LePage  
GOVERNOR

VIA HAND DELIVERY JAN. 4, 2016

December 31, 2015

Rita Moran, Chair  
Kennebec County Democratic Committee  
219 Route 133  
Winthrop, ME 04364

Re: Vacancy of Kennebec County Sheriff position

Dear Ms. Moran:

After speaking with members of my staff, it appears that your committee and I are at somewhat of a standoff with regard to the above-referenced matter. While I can appreciate your political gamesmanship, I hope we can move past this standoff and move forward with the business of governing.

As you undoubtedly know, when the office of sheriff is vacated, the Maine Constitution and statutes impose obligations on both me and your committee in filling that vacancy. The Maine Constitution provides that "all vacancies in the office of sheriff ... shall be filled in the same manner as is provided in the case of judges and registers of probate." Me. Const. Art. IX, §10. Also pursuant to the Constitution, vacancies in the offices of judges or registers of probate are filled by election in the following November, yet "... in the meantime, the Governor may fill said vacancy by appointment ..." Me. Const. Art. VI, §6. The process by which a vacancy in the office of sheriff is filled is governed by 30-A M.R.S. §371-B(2), which provides that in making the appointment, "the Governor shall choose from any recommendations submitted to the Governor by the county committee of the political party from which the appointment is made" (emphasis added).

As Chair of the Kennebec County Democratic Committee, you recommended one name to fill the vacancy left by former Sheriff Randy Liberty. After receipt of the one name, my office asked you for another recommendation, a request I believe you refused. While I understand your Committee's desire to make the appointment, yourself, the constitutional appointment power and the statutorily granted **choice** of recommendations both rest in the Governor. I doubt you believe that the Legislature intended the law to be manipulated in this way. Your refusal to fulfill your statutory obligation out of political maneuvering fails to serve the interests of Kennebec County citizens and exemplifies the reason for my frustration and disappointment with party politics.

Please be advised that I will move forward as I deem appropriate should you continue to



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disregard the interests of the citizens of Kennebec County.

Sincerely,

Paul R. LePage  
Governor