

# St. Louis County Council



**Ernest G. Trakas**

St. Louis County Council, 6th District

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August 21, 2020

Via electronic mail - [moaudit@auditor.mo.gov](mailto:moaudit@auditor.mo.gov)

State Auditor Nicole Galloway  
Office of Missouri State Auditor  
State Capitol Building  
201 W Capitol Ave, Room 121  
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Re: August 12, 2020 Draft Report of Audit Findings

Dear Auditor Galloway,

I write today to express concern regarding your audit of St. Louis County government. The initial audit was presented to the County Council on August 19, and subsequently leaked to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* the following day in an apparent attempt to target County Executive Sam Page. As a Republican, my interest is not to defend Sam Page, but to defend the truth. That is why I feel the need to speak out regarding what I feel is at the very least *the appearance* of impropriety throughout multiple stages of this audit.

- Your failure to publicly disclose your close relationship with one of Steve Stenger's key political consultants to the County Council is deeply concerning. At no point did you inform County Council members that your uncle, Patrick Lynn, served as a top political advisor to Steve Stenger<sup>1</sup> while also serving as one of your highest-paid political strategists.<sup>2</sup>
- The County Council repeatedly asked you to audit Stenger's conduct in 2017 and 2018, yet you failed to publicly criticize him until after he was indicted by the federal government for corruption that was plain as day to any public observer.<sup>3</sup> We felt this criticism was too little too late, and that your failure to act earlier could be construed as an effort to protect your uncle and political advisor's client.
- During the time of Stenger's gross misconduct your uncle and political advisor, Patrick Lynn, served as principal<sup>4</sup> and lobbyist<sup>5</sup> for a firm with ties to multiple known Stenger associates who

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<sup>1</sup> ("St. Louis County Councilman Steve Stenger (right) goes over his acceptance speech with his campaign advisor Patrick Lynn," [St. Louis Post Dispatch](#), 8/6/14)

<sup>2</sup> (Missouri Ethics Commission, Expenditure Search, Keep Government Accountable); Patrick Lynn's firm, Show Me Victories received over \$144,000 from Nicole Galloway's PAC during her 2018 campaign.

<sup>3</sup> ("St. Louis County Executive Steve Stenger indicted on charges of bribery and mail fraud, resigns: 5 things to know," [FOX2 Now](#), 4/29/19; "Statement on indictment of St. Louis County Executive," [State Auditor Nicole Galloway](#), 4/29/19)

<sup>4</sup> (Patrick Lynn, [The Missouri Times](#), 8/3/13)



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- could have potentially been implicated in the audit. This was a clear conflict of interest that should have been disclosed to the County Council.
- It is my understanding that your office attempted to present the audit findings to Council Chairwoman Lisa Clancy the week before County Executive Sam Page's primary contest with Mark Mantovani. *The Post-Dispatch* leak revealed that the audit was a political missile aimed directly at Sam Page. In another concerning coincidence, your uncle and political advisor Patrick Lynn served as a campaign manager to Page's opponent Mark Mantovani.<sup>6</sup> This is deeply concerning, as it appears your office attempted to time the release of the report to inflict maximum damage on the opponent of your uncle and political advisor.

Missourians must be able to trust that our State Auditor is on the level and not using the office to advance his or her political interests. Therefore, I hereby request that you respond to the following questions before formally releasing your audit.

- 1) Why didn't you disclose the conflict of interest stemming from your and Steve Stenger's relationship with Patrick Lynn?
- 2) Why did you fail to publicly call for an audit of Steve Stenger until after he was indicted?
- 3) Did your audit look into contracts procured by Patrick Lynn and other known Stenger associates? If not, why?
- 4) Why did you approach Councilwoman Clancy a week before Sam Page's primary with Mark Mantovani with an offer to give the audit to the Council?
- 5) Did you ever discuss your audit of the County Council with Patrick Lynn?

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

*Ernie Trakas*

Ernest G. Trakas

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<sup>5</sup> (Patrick Lynn, Missouri Ethics Commission Lobbying Search, Registration 12/8/14-3/2/20)

<sup>6</sup> ("Mark Mantovani Campaign for St. Louis County Executive Receives Solid Support in Short Time; Outraises Opponents in First Quarter, [Mark Mantovani for County Executive](#), 4/15/20)

