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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Davis and Caparelli-Ruff: Attorney General Must Act Now in ROE-PDA Corruption Scandal**

**YORKVILLE / JOLIET, IL:** State Representative Jed Davis (R-Yorkville) and Will County Regional Superintendent Lisa Caparelli-Ruff are calling on Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul to immediately launch a sweeping investigation into a deeply rooted public corruption scheme involving the Grundy-Kendall-Will Regional Office of Education and the Professional Development Alliance (PDA).

Their call follows damning evidence — including federal grand jury subpoenas and a third-party forensic audit — revealing the use of public resources to support offshore casino operations, the development of private software for profit, and the misuse of Illinois' public pension system to benefit individuals performing private work under the guise of public employment.

“Taxpayer dollars were not just misused — they were boosting personal gain, propping up private ventures, and manipulating a public retirement system already buckling under pressure,” said Rep. Jed Davis. “The time for waiting is over. The Attorney General must act now. Illinois deserves justice, not more silence.”

#### Highlights from the Investigation:

- PDA resources and staff were used to support an offshore gambling venture — the Majestic Isle Casino in Antigua — while PDA employees worked under Vista Learning, a private nonprofit.
- PDA employees were diverted from public duties to develop and support EvaluWise, a for-profit software product later sold by Vista Learning, all while drawing salaries and benefits as if they were public employees.
- The operation featured a revolving door of overlapping leadership, including former ROE Superintendents Shawn Walsh, Chris Mehochko, and others with direct financial and political ties to both public and private entities.

“As soon as I took office, I uncovered irregularities that could not be ignored,” said Superintendent Lisa Caparelli-Ruff. “We have whistleblowers, we have documentation, we have servers full of emails — and now we need real consequences. If the Attorney General doesn’t act, the message to bad actors is clear: corruption pays.”

#### Public Pension Abuse:

Private contractors who were not state or municipal employees received public retirement benefits by being routed through PDA payroll. These individuals were often performing nearly 100% private work, while gaining access to taxpayer-backed pension and healthcare benefits.

“These benefits are intended for long-serving public workers — not people performing private work with a public title,” said Davis. “This misuse has eroded trust in a pension system that’s already under serious financial strain. While real public servants are asked to do more with less, others walked away with pensions they didn’t earn.”

#### We are calling for:

- Immediate investigation by the Illinois Attorney General into the full extent of the PDA/Vista corruption;
- Criminal charges, where appropriate, for anyone who knowingly misused public funds or violated ethics laws;
- A forensic audit of all PDA and ROE-related financial transactions;
- A full review of IMRF participation and eligibility enforcement for all public entities across Illinois;
- Structural safeguards to prevent future misuse of taxpayer dollars in intergovernmental agencies.

“This isn’t about one bad actor. This is a network of insiders who gamed the system for years,” Caparelli-Ruff added. “Our students, educators, and taxpayers deserve better.”

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