

August 20, 2015

JOINT STATEMENT: 38-Studios and Pawtucket Red Sox Stadium deals

FROM: WatchdogRI.org, RI Taxpayers, and the RI Center for
Freedom & Prosperity

Following yesterday's revelation that disgraced former Speaker Gordon Fox had the earliest and lead role in pushing for the 38 Studios deal, and with the backdrop that Fox in public statements denied knowledge of the deal in its earliest stages, we the undersigned, on behalf of all Rhode Islanders, call for immediate action by our state's political and judicial leaders.

Alarmed at the growing trend of Rhode Island government to secretly negotiate and implement special interest deals that adversely impact taxpayers without adequate and open public and legislative oversight, and in order to restore public trust in our government to act in the best interests of the taxpaying public, we therefore make the following demands:

1. We call on Superior Court Judge Michael Silverstein to unseal all documents relating to the 38 Studios affair. There is a compelling public interest to understand who the key players were in developing this deal, what their motivations were for doing so and how they may have profited from the deal. We need to understand the dynamics that made it possible for this disastrous deal to be completed – so that we can ensure that it can never happen again.
2. We call on Governor Raimondo to launch an independent investigation, potentially naming a special investigator outside of any Rhode Island-based sphere of political influence, to look into all participants and actions that led to the 38-Studio deal, so that the public can be fully informed of how this crony deal came to pass. To function properly as a State, the public's trust must be restored that our elected leaders have our best interests at heart. We believe that the pushback against the baseball stadium comes largely from a lack of trust on the part of the public that our government is acting in our best interests.
3. We call on Speaker Mattiello to agree to grant any and all subpoena requests made by Chairwoman Karen MacBeth's House Oversight Committee with regard to the committee's 38 Studios investigation and to publicly support the resumption of committee hearings this fall.

4. In order to avoid a “38 Stadium” boondoggle, we call on the Governor and the Speaker to immediately and publicly disclose the most recently proposed terms of the Pawtucket Red Sox relocation negotiations, and to pledge to make all future negotiations as public as possible.

The public must be reassured that their government is open and accountable to the voters.

Signed,

Mike Stenhouse



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