

State police investigate sexual misconduct allegations against ex-state rep, execute search warrant at Madigan's Capitol offices

Illinois State Police are investigating allegations including sexual misconduct and stalking against Jack Franks, a former state representative, now McHenry County Board chairman. Franks denies any wrongdoing.

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By [Tina Sfondeles](#) Jan 31, 2020

Illinois State Police recently executed a search warrant at Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan's Capitol offices as part of a sexual misconduct and stalking investigation of Jack Franks, a former state representative who now serves as McHenry County Board chairman, the Chicago Sun-Times has learned.

State police got records from Madigan's offices on Wednesday afternoon, the same day Gov. J.B. Pritzker delivered his State of the State address in a packed Capitol.

The search warrant — obtained by the Sun-Times via a Freedom of Information Act request — says state police justified the search because “probable cause exists for the crimes of criminal sexual abuse, criminal sexual assault, official misconduct, stalking and aggravated battery.”

Police requested personnel, human resources or other files “containing information related to allegations of wrongdoing or misconduct by former Illinois State Representative Jack D. Franks.”

It also asked for “reports or complaints related to sexual misconduct, harassment, stalking or other misconduct by Franks.”

State police declined to comment. Franks has not been charged and denies any wrongdoing.

Franks told the Sun-Times on Friday he was unaware of the search warrant and has not been notified by “anyone about any matter.”

Franks, a Democrat from Marengo, served in the Illinois House from 1999 to 2017. He was elected McHenry County Board chairman in 2016.

The speaker's office on Friday said a complaint was first received about alleged sexual harassment involving an employee of the speaker's office and a former state representative on Nov. 19, 2018. Madigan and his chief of staff were notified, and an investigation began.

Based on the allegations, Madigan told his chief counsel to notify Franks that he faced various restrictions, including a prohibition against any contact with employees in his office.

The speaker's office also spoke to the alleged victim to see if she was in danger or needed any accommodations. She requested confidentiality and initially did not participate in the investigation, the office said. The woman ultimately provided information, the speaker's office said.

In February 2019, the speaker's office determined the harassment allegations were "credible," and the speaker asked Illinois Secretary of State Capitol Police to ban Franks from entering the Capitol without an escort, the speaker's office said.

A month later, the speaker's office said they received even more information about the allegations, which increased in severity, and based on that, the office called various law enforcement agencies to report "possible criminal conduct."

The allegations date back to 2016, according to the speaker's office. When the initial complaint was received, several speaker's office staffers said they witnessed Franks and the alleged victim speaking privately, a conversation that left her shaken "to the core." That was reported to senior staff at the speaker's office.

Madigan himself called the Sangamon County State's attorney to say his office had information about possible criminal conduct and would fully cooperate, according to the speaker's office. Madigan's staff later met with law enforcement to provide information.

The victim met with state police, and the speaker's office also informed Legislative Inspector General Carol Pope and Maggie Hickey, the former inspector general who was hired by Madigan to conduct an independent investigation into the speaker's office in 2018.

State police requested records on Jan. 24. Three days later, Madigan's attorney reached out to discuss protocol for submitting the documents. The speaker's office said they tried to call the state's attorney's office for two days earlier this week but got no response.

Then came the search warrant, which state police executed Wednesday.

In a statement, Madigan said his office immediately took steps to protect the alleged victim and conducted an investigation after receiving the report of "alleged sexual harassment."

"Based on information received during the investigation and subsequent to it, my office informed the appropriate authorities of the allegations and the investigation, including the Sangamon County State's Attorney, the Secretary of State Capitol Police, and the Illinois State Police for further review and action," Madigan said in the statement. "I remain committed to working to protect the victim and will see this matter to its conclusion in order to ensure the victim's safety."

State police were looking for personnel, human resources or other files with information about allegations of wrongdoing by Franks as well as names and contact information of all prior legislative assistants assigned to Franks.

It also requested reports or complaints about sexual misconduct, harassment or stalking “by Franks,” and for any “complete internal investigation of any complaints” against Franks.

Franks told the Sun-Times he issued a “full denial” to the speaker’s office last year.

“In April of 2019, I received correspondence from the speaker’s office, which I quickly responded to with a full denial,” Franks said. “Since then, I’ve heard nothing from the speaker’s office about the matter, and I know nothing about a search warrant. I haven’t been contacted about anyone about any matter, other than that letter nine months ago.”