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Mass. State Police union president resigns

By **Danny McDonald** Globe Staff, September 16, 2019, 6:13 p.m.



JESSICA RINALDI/GLOBE STAFF/FILE

Facing a recall vote this week from his union, the head of the State Police Association of Massachusetts resigned Monday, the latest leadership change to roil one of the state's most powerful labor unions.

Sergeant Mark Lynch cited conflict with the union's executive board in a letter sent to the 1,900-member union, which represents State Police troopers and sergeants.

"Due to the direction that the E-board has taken and continues to take, I can no longer serve as president of the State Police Association of Massachusetts and will be resigning effective September 16, 2019," Lynch wrote.

Lynch took the position as union president last year and succeeded Dana Pullman, [who had resigned](#) amid a federal probe into possible illegal reimbursement of campaign donations by union members. Pullman was indicted last week on a host of federal charges, including racketeering and conspiracy, and could face decades behind bars if convicted. Through an attorney, he has denied the charges.

In his Monday letter, Lynch, who was supposed to rebuild the union's reputation after Pullman's resignation, said he knew when he accepted the position that it would be a "daunting task," referring to a "perfect storm of scandal, allegations and mismanagement." Lynch, however, has faced a crisis of confidence [in recent weeks](#), with more than 500 union members signing a petition calling for his removal. The recall vote was slated for this Wednesday.

"It is the responsibility of the President to act on behalf of the membership, keep the membership informed and work with the administration on work-related matters," read the petition. "This has not been happening."

A spokeswoman for the union, known by the acronym SPAM, declined to comment beyond Lynch's letter.

A spokesman for the State Police declined to comment.

A message left with Pullman's attorney was not immediately returned Monday afternoon.

Earlier this month, Lynch indicated there had been a scheduled union vote at an Aug. 29 meeting on whether to discontinue funding legal expenses for Pullman. Lynch said in a Sept. 4 letter to union membership the vote could not be taken because a required quorum of 150 members were not present and able to vote. He also indicated the vote would take place this Wednesday, the same day that his recall vote was scheduled.

He urged union members to attend that meeting, saying "This vote will be a direct reflection on you, on the kind of people we are and what matters to us as an organization."

Lynch did say the union's executive board met on Aug. 29 and voted 7 to 5 that SPAM continue to pay all of Pullman's legal fees all the way through to the end of trial, according to the Sept. 4 letter. Lynch said he voted "no" and that to date union members have paid "about \$900,000 towards legal defense."

"Continuing to do so would cost members between another \$600,000 to \$1 million and may result in a special assessment if it exceeds our ability to redirect funds from ongoing programs to cover it," he said.

He added, "We, as an organization, are at one of the lowest points in our history in terms of public perception, political power and stature."

Lynch suggested that subsidizing Pullman's legal expenses "will further define who we are in the public eye, before the legislature and the Governor, and before those we care about."

Pullman was arrested last month and accused of taking kickbacks from the union's former lobbyist and using union money for personal expenses including meals, travel, flowers, and gifts for a girlfriend.

Pullman's corruption charges are the latest scandal involving the troubled State Police, which has been rocked by accusations that dozens of troopers collected pay for hours they never worked.

The scandals have implicated 46 troopers; eight have pleaded guilty to embezzlement charges and two others face charges.

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