# First Minister of Scotland defends challenge against suspension over data roaming bill



John Swinney, First Minister of Scotland, has defended his decision to challenge the 27-day suspension ordered against Michael Matheson by Holyrood's Standards Committee. The suspension relates to a near £11,000 data roaming bill incurred on Matheson's parliamentary iPad. Swinney contends that the committee's decision was prejudiced due to previous critical comments made by Conservative committee member Annie Wells.

Swinney stated that prejudice had damaged the process and noted that another Conservative MSP had also withdrawn from the committee over similar concerns. He emphasized the importance of unbiased proceedings in the Scottish Parliament.

Criticism has come from various quarters, including Scottish Labour deputy leader Jackie Baillie, who condemned Swinney’s defense of Matheson, arguing that it indicates deeper issues within the SNP. Matheson has faced scrutiny for attempting to claim the substantial expenses incurred by his sons during a family holiday in Morocco.

In related political developments, Swinney also addressed remarks made by Patrick Harvie, co-leader of the Scottish Greens, regarding the SNP’s position on climate and the fossil fuel industry. Swinney reiterated the SNP's commitment to a just transition to net-zero emissions while balancing economic considerations.