# Former Health Secretary faces suspension vote over £11,000 data roaming bill controversy



Former Health Secretary Michael Matheson is set to face a vote on his suspension from the Scottish Parliament on Wednesday afternoon. A committee led by MSPs has recommended that Matheson be suspended for 27 sitting days and lose 54 days' salary. This recommendation follows a controversy involving a nearly £11,000 data roaming bill incurred on his parliamentary iPad during a family holiday in Morocco, a cost initially claimed as parliamentary business before it was discovered that his sons had accrued the charge while watching football online.

The vote is expected to be closely contested, with 63 SNP MSPs and 65 opposition MSPs involved. The Presiding Officer, Alison Johnstone, will cast a deciding vote in the event of a tie, typically in favor of the status quo. John Swinney, the First Minister, has declared he will not support the suspension, citing prejudicial comments made by a member of the standards committee, Annie Wells.

A further Conservative-led debate is scheduled to call for Matheson’s resignation. However, the support of the Scottish Greens for the recommended sanctions but their refusal to back the call for his resignation makes it unlikely that the motion for him to step down will pass.