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*Via electronic mail*

Chicago Tribune  
Editorial Board

Dear Editor:

Thank you for writing an article relating to State employees on paid administrative leave. In light of the fact that the article discusses our agency and the time it takes to conduct investigations, we were hoping for an opportunity to respond. Consistent with your 400 word limit, we have drafted our response below, which we have also pasted in our email.

We appreciate the *Chicago Tribune's* consideration in deciding whether to publish our letter to the editor. In addition, at your convenience, I am happy to appear before the editorial board for the purpose of responding to any questions you might have about our agency.

**Misconduct Must be Investigated Thoroughly and Timely**

As head of the State agency tasked with investigating waste, fraud and abuse relating to more than 175,000 public employees, appointees, and officials, including those at executive branch State agencies and the four regional transit boards, I could not agree more with the notion that allegations of misconduct must be timely investigated. This is why, despite the steady increase in the number of allegations of misconduct our agency has received (1,171 in FY 2010 to 2,492 in FY 2012) since my September 2010 appointment, this agency has reduced its pending case load from 263 to 115.

I agree that Illinois can ill afford to "shell out" millions of dollars to pay employees to stay at home as *Chicago Tribune* reporters Jared S. Hopkins and Alex Richards reveal in their article: Paid to Stay Home (Oct. 21, 2012). Conducting investigations quickly, however, is not the only consideration. State employees also deserve to be investigated fairly and objectively, and investigations must be conducted thoroughly—no employee or member of the public should or would want it any other way.

Numerous factors affect how quickly an investigation can be completed. For one thing, we have focused the agency's resources on matters that involve large fraud or systemic misconduct. Larger, more complex investigations take more time than smaller ones. Moreover, what might otherwise start as a "simple investigation," can result in the discovery of a multi-

million dollar, multi-year, multi-agency scheme to defraud, such as was the case in the eight-month long investigation our agency co-investigated relating to a DCFS grantee. However, compare the DCFS matter with our agency's report relating to now former State employee and current Village of Riverdale Mayor Deyon Dean. Although Mr. Dean was never on paid administrative leave, our investigation took time because he used multiple means to mask his misconduct. Mr. Dean's misconduct was also difficult to uncover because the State paid him to conduct "community outreach," one form of which was for the very community that he served as mayor. Our thorough investigation ultimately resulted in Mr. Dean's resignation and, but for our investigation, he might very well still be on the State's payroll.

Finally, while difficult to calculate, if one quantifies the deterrent effect our investigations have on public employees who might opt not to perform their duties or responsibilities, there is no doubt our investigations have saved and will save millions of dollars in resources.

Sincerely,



Ricardo Meza  
Executive Inspector General