



# Illinois Ethics Matters

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*Honesty, Integrity, Service*

A newsletter from the Office of Executive Inspector General for the Agencies  
of the Illinois Governor

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## Recent News

- The OEIG is pleased to announce that **Jasmine Velazquez** and **Kathy Schwass** began as Investigators in the Chicago office and **Brandy Eller** began as an Investigative Assistant in the Springfield office.

## OEIG Finds False Disability Leave Requests



While investigating allegations of misconduct at the Department of Human Services (DHS), the OEIG discovered several disability leave request forms, filed on different dates on behalf of a DHS employee, which appeared to be photocopies of the same form from a single doctor's appointment. The OEIG expanded its investigation into potential misuse of the disability forms.

Nickoilya Burks filed for extended disability leave from early June 2015 through early September 2015, and later filed for three extensions. All three extension requests were nearly identical; the last two requests appeared to be photocopies of the first request, except for the date, which appeared altered with correction fluid; and the latter two extension forms were not received from the doctor's office, but from a fax machine at a credit union near Ms. Burks' residence.

When asked, the doctor denied authorizing the last two extension requests, and his assistant said she usually requests that a patient complete a new extension request and not make a correction to a pre-existing one.

The DHS Employee Handbook states that employees "shall not participate in or condone fraud, dishonesty, or misrepresentation in the performance of duties." The OEIG concluded that Ms. Burks violated that policy by submitting two fraudulent extension forms. DHS agreed and initiated discipline. Ms. Burks ultimately resigned.

A copy of the report, [\*\*In re: Burks, Case #15-01647\*\*](#), is available for download on the OEIG website, [inspectorgeneral.illinois.gov](http://inspectorgeneral.illinois.gov).

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## Metra Job Applicant Falsified Record

The OEIG investigated allegations that a recently-hired Metra employee had falsified information on his application by improperly omitting details of his previous employment.

Ronald Basenberg worked for Canadian Pacific (CP) for more than two decades. He was fired by the company in March 2015 and the following month applied for a position with Metra. His application noted that he had worked for CP but claimed he left voluntarily due to "too much stress" when in fact he was terminated for cause.

During his OEIG interview, Mr. Basenberg admitted that he falsified his Metra application, stating that he was embarrassed about his termination and needed new employment. In a written statement to Metra, Mr. Basenberg stated that he did not disclose his termination because, at the time, he had a pending union grievance.

Metra discharged Mr. Basenberg as a result of the falsification.

A copy of the report, [\*\*In re: Basenberg, Case #16-01981\*\*](#), is available on the OEIG website.