



Illinois Ethics Matters

September 25, 2015

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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 the following changes to its staff:

- **Anthony-Ray Sepulveda** began as an Investigator in the Regional Transit Board Division, effective August 31, 2015.

The Executive Ethics Commission released the following matters on September 18, 2015:

- **In re: Kwa Mister (11-01495)**
- **In re: Greene, Dash & Blake (14-00421)**
- **In re: Kotas (16 EEC 002)**

The OEIG's August 2015 newsletter discussed the use of State email for, among other things, prohibited political activity (PPA). This month's newsletter reports on an EEC disciplinary decision and a published OEIG report that arise from misuse of State email for PPA.

IDOC Employee Fined for Prohibited Political Activity



The EEC announced on September 17 that it levied a \$2,000 fine against a Department of Corrections (IDOC) employee for political use of State email. The EEC levied the fine in response to a complaint filed by the OEIG through the Office of the Attorney General.

The OEIG investigation concluded that an employee at Stateville Correctional Center violated the Ethics Act by using her State e-mail to discuss materials for a political fundraising event.

“State employees shall not intentionally misappropriate any State property or resources by engaging in any prohibited political activity for the benefit of any campaign for elective office or any political organization.”

– *Ethics Act, 5 ILCS 430/5-15(a)*

The EEC cited the following factors in determining the fine: that the employee sent many campaign-related emails over several days; that she was familiar with the ban on prohibited political activities; that many of her emails were sent to fellow IDOC employees; and that this is her first offense (a mitigating factor).

The EEC ruling, *Hickey v Elberson (15 EEC 006)*, is available on the OEIG website.

UIUC Professors Disciplined for Prohibited Political Activity

Three professors at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana (UIUC) were disciplined by the University following an OEIG investigation into improper email use for political purposes. The three professors, who taught physics, journalism and literature, used their university email accounts to solicit money and gather support for their colleague, Prof. George Gollin, who sought election to Congress in 2014.

The OEIG investigation found that each had sent multiple emails for a variety of political purposes, including touting Prof. Gollin to colleagues; planning support sessions at academic conferences, and soliciting campaign contributions.

The Ethics Act prohibits university employees from engaging in political activity on compensated time and with university resources. Violations may result in penalties ranging from discipline by the university to monetary fines.

A related OEIG investigation led the EEC to levy a \$5,000 fine against Prof. Gollin, as was announced earlier this year (*14 EEC 011*).