



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

Office of Executive Inspector General

Ricardo Meza
Executive
Inspector General

Cole S. Kain
Chief of Staff &
General Counsel

Erin K. Bonales
Deputy Inspector General
& Chief of Chicago
Division

Neil P. Olson
Deputy Inspector General
& Chief of Springfield
Division

James J. Bonk
Chief of Regional Transit
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Division

Rochelle Hardy
Chief Financial &
Compliance Officer

David Keahl
Director of Ethics
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Wendy Washington
Director of Human
Resources

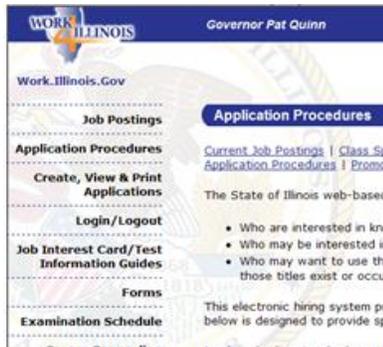
Chicago Office:
32 W. Randolph Street
Suite 1900
Chicago, IL 60601
(312) 814-5600

Springfield Office:
607 E. Adams Street
14th Floor
Springfield, IL 62701
(217) 558-5600

Hotline:
Phone: (866) 814-1113

TTY:
(888) 261-2734

Mary Lee Leahy and the Legacy of *Rutan v. Republican Party of Illinois*



Attorney Mary Lee Leahy, the lead attorney in *Rutan v. Republican Party of Illinois*, 497 U.S. 62 (1990), passed away on Wednesday, December 12, 2012.

In 1990, the United States Supreme Court issued the *Rutan* decision that held that public officials could not use political affiliation as a basis for hiring decisions relating to non-policy-making positions. In the wake of the *Rutan* decision, Illinois Governors and the Illinois Department of Central Management Services, among others, have issued procedures to create a hiring process based on merit, not political affiliation, for these *Rutan* positions. In 2009, the General Assembly amended the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act and, among other things, expanded the duties of Executive Inspectors General:

To review hiring and employment files of each State agency within the Executive Inspector General’s jurisdiction to ensure compliance with *Rutan*, [] and with all applicable employment laws.

As a result of this amendment to the Ethics Act, the Executive Inspector General for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor has reviewed and will continue to review and monitor state agency hiring practices.

“There are many reasons why persons choose a career in law. And, through an attorney’s efforts, the trajectory of a client’s life can often be changed for the better. However, sometimes, a lawyer comes along who not only changes the life of her client but also changes the lives of hundreds if not thousands of others—as Ms. Leahy did with the *Rutan* case. As one of the agencies whose responsibility includes making certain *Rutan*’s dictates are followed, we can think of no better way to honor the work of Ms. Leahy than by making certain all state agencies fully comply with *Rutan*.” – Executive Inspector General Ricardo Meza

The Office of Executive Inspector General issues this *Special Edition Newsletter* in order to thank and recognize Ms. Leahy for her success in changing Illinois’ patronage-based hiring climate. Her advocacy had and will continue to have a positive impact not only on the lives of citizens seeking state employment, but also on the Illinois citizenry, who necessarily benefit from merit-based hiring decisions. In honor of Ms. Leahy’s legacy, and in keeping with its statutory mandate, the Office of Executive Inspector General will continue to diligently seek to root out all *Rutan* violations.

Ricardo Meza

Executive Inspector General for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor