



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 the following addition to its staff:

- **Latoya Stampley** joined the office as Supervisor of Information Technology / Computer Forensics, effective June 1, 2015.

Appellate Court Upholds Penalty for Failure to Cooperate with an OEIG Investigation



On May 27, the Illinois Appellate Court upheld the Executive Ethics Commission's (EEC) imposition of a fine against a state employee for failing to cooperate in an OEIG investigation, in violation of the Ethics Act. The case, *Harts v Illinois Executive Ethic Commission*, is the first time an appellate court has addressed this Ethics Act's cooperation requirement.

In the underlying investigation, *Meza v Harts* (11EEC004), the OEIG found that former Illinois Gaming Board (IGB) employee Kathy Harts had failed to cooperate with its investigation by making false statements to OEIG investigators. The OEIG concluded that Ms. Harts falsely denied sending more than 400 IGB emails, some including confidential agency records, to a private email account. Her denial was contradicted by forensic computer evidence, her signed timesheet, and the statement of her supervisor.

The EEC agreed that Ms. Harts had violated the Ethics Act by making false statements, and levied an administrative fine of \$750 against her.

On appeal, the Appellate Court upheld the EEC decision.

[Harts' claims] are not supported by any facts contained in the record or any relevant controlling legal authority. As such, these baseless allegations provide this court with no basis to overturn the Commission's ... decision."

-Justice Aurelia Pucinski

The ruling highlights the importance of cooperating in OEIG investigations, not just by appearing for investigative interviews, but by telling the truth in those interviews.

OEIG Cooperation with Law Enforcement Agencies

Although the OEIG does not have authority to bring criminal charges, OEIG investigations often uncover potentially criminal activity. When that occurs, the OEIG cooperates with law enforcement agencies, such as State's Attorney Offices, the Illinois Attorney General's Office, and United States Attorney Offices, to facilitate criminal investigation and, if warranted, prosecution.

For example, on June 18, 2015, the Illinois Attorney General's Office acknowledged assistance from the OEIG in a case resulting in charges that DHS employee Mary Hurst stole over \$114,000 in assistance for needy families by issuing herself LINK cards under the names of four fictitious DHS clients that she created.

Ms. Hurst has been charged with theft of government monies over \$100,000, which is punishable by six to 30 years in prison, and five counts of official misconduct, each punishable by two to five years in prison. DHS and the Illinois State Police also assisted the Attorney General's Office in the investigation.