



# Illinois Ethics Matters

February 4, 2019

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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 **Marina Bergamo** began as an Analyst in the Hiring & Employment Monitoring Division in Chicago.

## The OEIG's Continuing Commitment to Hiring Reform

### HEM

Since its inception in 2016, the Hiring & Employment Monitoring Division (HEM) has worked closely with the court-appointed Special Master in the *Shakman* matter. Responsibilities have included creating a comprehensive list of exempt positions under the Governor's jurisdiction (Exempt List) and developing an employment plan for those positions, both of which were part of orders recently filed in federal court.

The first order, entered on January 7, 2019, contains the employment plan for exempt positions, as well as general hiring principles and commitments for all State positions. The January 7 order requires agencies to certify that individuals selected for exempt positions meet the minimum qualifications and will be performing the duties of their positions. The order also requires all State employees to immediately report any unlawful hiring-related political discrimination or contact to the OEIG.

The second order, entered on January 22, 2019, contains the Exempt List currently including 953 positions that shall be filled through the process set forth in the January 7 order. HEM significantly contributed to developing the Exempt List by, among other things, reviewing nearly 1,200 positions to determine whether each should qualify for exemption. The Exempt List is publicly posted [here](#).

### Investigations

A recent OEIG investigation details an improper patronage hire at the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA).

The investigation revealed that CTA created a position for Eric McKennie in October 2016, which had essentially the same duties as an open position, but without the required hiring procedures and with a significantly higher salary. Mr. McKennie's hire into this position was initiated by the VP of Legislative Affairs, who forwarded Mr. McKennie's resume to senior management. The VP was aware of Mr. McKennie's relationship with a State legislator; Mr. McKennie also held himself out as being married to that State legislator during the hiring process.

The OEIG found that CTA unfairly discriminated against qualified individuals who did not have such political connections. The OEIG also found that Mr. McKennie failed to report for a full day of work for 51 out of the 57 days he was supposed to be working, along with other numerous timekeeping violations.

CTA hired Mr. McKennie shortly after he was laid off from his "Staff Assistant" position at the Illinois Department of Transportation; that position title was eliminated after a 2014 OEIG investigation uncovered that IDOT regularly misused it to make political hires.

A copy of the OEIG report, *In re: Chicago Transit Authority, et al. (Case #17-00162)*, is available on the OEIG website.