



# NEWS RELEASE

Office of the New York State Welfare Inspector General  
**Catherine Leahy Scott – Acting Welfare Inspector General**

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## **SCHENECTADY WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY, TO PAY FULL RESTITUTION, FOR STEALING MORE THAN \$50,000 IN WELFARE BENEFITS BY CONCEALING HER HUSBAND’S INCOME**

ALBANY – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott announced the felony guilty plea of a Schenectady woman who defrauded the welfare system by more than \$50,000 by applying for benefits and concealing the fact that she lived with and was married to the father of her three children, a long-tenured full-time employee at a local hospital making more than \$45,000 per year. As part of the plea agreement, the woman was ordered to pay full restitution.

Victoria Bell (also known as Victoria Pacheco), 36, of Eastern Parkway, Schenectady, pleaded guilty in Schenectady County Court to Welfare Fraud in the Third Degree, a felony. The plea agreement includes Bell paying \$51,709 in restitution for the food stamp and Medicaid benefits she improperly received. She is also expected to serve five years of probation and 75 hours of community service.

An investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott found that since August 2012, Bell received more than \$50,000 in food stamp and Medicaid benefits to which she was not entitled. While improperly receiving those benefits, Bell repeatedly filed public benefit applications and re-certifications in which she failed to mention she lived with and was married to the father of her three children who worked full time at Schenectady’s Ellis Hospital. Bell, separately, had also been earning more than \$10,000 each year working part-time in retail.

“This defendant’s repeated fraud and deceit enabled her to improperly tap into a government benefit program meant only for those who are truly the most in need of financial assistance,” said **Inspector General Leahy Scott**. “I will continue to use the resources at my disposal to protect taxpayer-funded government resources.”

Bell is due to reappear in Schenectady County Court on Oct. 12, 2017 for sentencing.

The Inspector General thanked the New York State Police for their assistance with the arrest, and Schenectady County District Attorney Robert M. Carney and his office for prosecuting this matter.

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*The New York State Office of the Welfare Inspector General investigates fraud, abuse or illegal acts committed against public assistance programs designed to help those in need. Our office also investigates complaints about the agencies and local social services districts who administer social services programs. Complaints and referrals are kept confidential. We can be reached by calling toll free: 1-800-367-4448, utilizing our online complaint form: <http://www.ig.ny.gov> or sending an email to: [inspector.general@ig.ny.gov](mailto:inspector.general@ig.ny.gov). You also can write*

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