



# NEWS RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Oct. 19, 2017  
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## **SCHENECTADY WOMAN SENTENCED, 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 sentencing 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.

Victoria Bell (also known as Victoria Pacheco), 36, of Eastern Parkway, Schenectady, pleaded guilty in Schenectady County Court in August to Welfare Fraud in the Third Degree, a felony. The plea agreement included Bell paying \$51,707 in restitution for the food stamp and Medicaid benefits she improperly received. Bell was sentenced to five years of probation and 75 hours of community service. Full restitution is to be paid during her period on probation.

“This defendant’s ongoing fraud enabled her to improperly receive taxpayer funded benefits 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 powers of my office to protect public resources.”

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.

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 to our office at: Office of the Welfare Inspector General, Empire State Plaza, Agency Building 2, 16th Floor Albany, New York 12223*

