



# NEWS

From New York State Inspector General  
**Ellen N. Biben**

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## Casino Inspector Improperly Received Gifts

New York State Inspector General Ellen Biben today released an investigative report that found a supervising casino inspector improperly accepted gifts from patrons and employees of an Upstate casino he was responsible for regulating.

Edward Hawks, a Supervising Gaming Inspector for the New York State Racing and Wagering Board, admitted that during the past few years he accepted various gifts from patrons, vendors and employees of the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino, where he supervises nine State casino inspectors. Gifts included cigars from patrons, a clock and bar stools from slot machine vendors, and a windbreaker from the casino staff.

Hawks is responsible for supervising the oversight and regulatory activities at the casino.

“As a supervisor, Mr. Hawks had a duty to avoid any conflicts of interest, and as a State casino regulator even the appearance of a conflict is inexcusable,” said Inspector General Biben.

During the Inspector General’s investigation, Hawks denied the acceptance of the gifts was in exchange for any official action on his part. He also said he believed he was banned only from accepting gifts worth at least \$75 even though current law prohibits the receiving of gifts worth more than even “nominal value.” Records indicate Hawks completed ethics training as recently as last year.

Hawks began work at the Racing and Wagering Board in 1999 and has been in his current title since 2009. He is assigned full-time to the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino.

The Inspector General’s report was referred to the Racing and Wagering Board and the State Commission on Public Integrity for appropriate action. The Inspector General also recommends that the Board take steps to ensure that the ethics training provided to its employees is current and effective, particularly as it pertains to the receipt of gifts.

A copy of the report can be found by clicking [here](#)

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