



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General
Catherine Leahy Scott

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FORMER STATE PARKS EMPLOYEE USED GOVERNMENT CREDIT CARD FOR APPROXIMATELY TO \$4,000 IN PERSONAL EXPENSES INCLUDING RENT, VACATION TRAVEL AND RESTAURANT MEALS

ALBANY – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced the arrest of a former State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (“OPRHP”) employee on charges she used her government issued credit card for nearly \$4,000 in improper personal expenses including her rent, for personal vacation travel and for restaurant meals.

Cassie D. Charles, 24, formerly of Albany and now residing in Washington Heights, New York City, was arrested and charged today with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a felony. The charge accuses Charles of stealing nearly \$4,000 from New York State by making unauthorized personal charges on a credit card issued to her as part of her seasonal government employment with OPRHP.

An investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott found that Charles, a park recreation activity specialist, received her State-issued credit card in August 2016. The card was meant for work-related expenses only but she immediately began using it to pay past and current rent on her former Albany apartments through the Venmo online payment system. The investigation also developed information alleging she used the credit card for improper personal travel and meals in New York City.

“The charge in this case alleges that this defendant improperly used her taxpayer-subsidized credit card for personal expenses including travel and rent for her apartment,” said Inspector General Leahy Scott. “Her use of government resources to subsidize her living expenses was a brazen violation of the public trust. I will continue to use the powers of my offices to put an end to any improper use of public resources.”

Charles was arraigned in Albany City Court and released pending her reappearance in the same court on Tuesday, Aug. 8.

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked OPRHP for their assistance with the investigation, the New York State Park Police for their assistance with the arrest, and Albany County District Attorney P. David Soares and his office for prosecuting these cases.

The defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.

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