



# NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General  
**Catherine Leahy Scott**

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## **HUDSON VALLEY AIDE FOR THE DISABLED BILLED STATE FOR MORE THAN \$4,000 IN UNEARNED SALARY AND IMPROPER PERSONAL CAR RENTAL, MEALS, AND ADIRONDACK HOTEL CHARGES**

ALBANY – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced the arrest of a New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (“OPWDD”) employee on charges he was paid unearned salary and used his government issued credit card for improper personal expenses including car rentals, a lengthy hotel stay in the Adirondacks, and food, altogether totaling more than \$4,000 in thefts.

Luke O. Gaga, 29, of Wappingers Falls, was arrested and charged today with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, felonies, and Official Misconduct, a misdemeanor.

“The charges allege that this defendant enjoyed an improper taxpayer-subsidized retreat in the Adirondacks,” said Inspector General Leahy Scott. “His inappropriate and brazen use of taxpayer resources to subsidize his own personal rest and recreation was a brazen violation of the public trust. I will continue to use the resources of my offices to put a stop to any improper use of government resources.”

An investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott found that Gaga, a direct support assistant with OPWDD in Dutchess County, used his government issued credit card and other means between late September 2015 through mid-January 2016 to steal \$4,069 in unearned salary and personal expenses for which he was not entitled to be reimbursed. The expenses included an extended stay in an Adirondack hotel while he was not working, restaurant meals while he was not working, and for unearned salary on days in which he did not report to work. Gaga also submitted a falsified mileage report to be reimbursed for more than 2,200 vehicle miles on a rental car that was already paid for by the State.

Gaga was arraigned on the charges today in the City of Albany Court and released pending further court action.

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked OPWDD for its assistance with the investigation, the New York State Police for their assistance with the arrests, and Albany County District Attorney P. David Soares and his office for prosecuting this case.

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

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