



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General
Catherine Leahy Scott

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STATE EMPLOYEE CHARGED AND PLEADS GUILTY TO TIME ABUSE

BUFFALO – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced the arrest and guilty plea of a New York State Department of Transportation (“DOT”) office assistant who defrauded the state through the theft of nearly \$1,000 in paid wages for time she failed to report to work.

Lacey Gavazzo, 33, of Kingswood Lane, Hamburg, was arrested and charged with Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a felony, and Petit Larceny, a misdemeanor. At her arraignment today in Erie County Court, as part of a prearranged plea agreement, Gavazzo pleaded guilty to Petit Larceny.

An investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott found that from April 2017 through October 2017, Gavazzo submitted 37 fraudulent doctor’s notes from three different medical providers to justify paid sick leave status. In total, she was paid \$925.47 for wages to which she was not entitled. Prior to today’s guilty plea, Gavazzo paid back the full \$925.47 in stolen earnings as restitution.

“This defendant used fake medical notes for a shameless fraud meant to criminally enrich herself at the expense of taxpayers,” said Inspector General Leahy Scott. “I will use the full powers of my office to pursue any public employee who violates the public trust.”

Gavazzo was sentenced concurrent to her plea today to a conditional discharge.

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked the New York State Department of Transportation for their assistance with the investigation and Erie County District Attorney John J. Flynn and his office for prosecuting this matter.

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