



# NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General  
Catherine Leahy Scott

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## STATE PRISON EMPLOYEE SENTENCED FOR STEALING INMATE FUNDS TO PAY DOWN CREDIT CARD DEBT

BUFFALO – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced the sentencing of a former State prison employee for possession of a forged money order sent to an inmate by that inmate’s father but which she instead used to pay her own credit card bill.

Carole Kozak, 59, of Perrysburg, a former senior mail clerk for the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) assigned to the Gowanda Correctional Facility, was sentenced in Erie County Court today to a one year conditional discharge for her previous guilty plea to Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Third Degree. She was also ordered to perform 50 hours of community service.

An investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott found that in January 2016, Kozak altered a \$300 money order sent to an inmate by the inmate’s father, and then used that money order to pay her personal credit card bill.

“This woman used her position to intrude into an inmate’s personal mail and enrich herself,” said Inspector General Leahy Scott. “She violated the trust of her position and I will continue to pursue anyone in public service who uses their public position to commit crimes.”

Internal disciplinary charges were filed against Kozak by DOCCS during the investigation, and Kozak formally resigned her State position in late December 2016.

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked Erie County District Attorney John J. Flynn and his office for prosecuting this matter.

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