



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General
Catherine Leahy Scott

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STATE BENEFITS SYSTEM MANAGER CHARGED WITH THEFT OF MORE THAN \$9,000 IN PAYROLL REIMBURSEMENT CHECKS

ALBANY – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced the arrest of a New York State Workers’ Compensation Board Hudson Valley District Manager on a charge he stole more than \$9,000 by repeatedly cashing payroll checks that he should not have otherwise received.

Luis Torres, 67, of Venice, FL., and formerly of Halfmoon, NY., was charged today with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a felony.

An investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott found that Torres went out on Workers’ Compensation leave for a single day in September 2017. Pursuant to tax regulations for Workers’ Compensation payments, Torres received a reimbursement check for payroll taxes withheld for that day. However, payroll tax reimbursement checks continued to be sent to Torres during each pay period for more than a year afterwards, and he continued depositing those checks, as well as his regular payroll checks, allegedly knowing he wasn’t entitled to be reimbursed for withheld taxes when he was no longer out on a Workers’ Compensation claim.

Torres, who also worked a side job as a personal tax filing specialist at a bank, received and deposited more than \$9,000 in Social Security and Medicare tax reimbursements to which he was not entitled between September 2017 and the end of December 2018. As part of the investigation Torres told investigators about those reimbursement checks, “You don’t look a gift horse in the mouth.” Torres submitted for retirement from State service effective yesterday.

“With a career managing a complex payroll benefit system and side job as a tax examiner, this defendant knew perfectly well the difference between a gift horse and a blatant theft from taxpayers,” said Inspector General Leahy Scott. “This arrest sends a clear message that my office and my law enforcement partners will not tolerate such a clear violation of the public trust.”

Torres was arraigned on the charge today in Schenectady City Court and released on his own recognizance pending his reappearance in court on March 1, 2019.

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked the New York State Police for their assistance with the arrest, and Schenectady County District Attorney Robert M. Carney 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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