

OFFICE OF THE LEGISLATIVE INSPECTOR GENERAL

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FOUNDED REPORT - CONFIDENTIAL

May 2, 2012

Hon. John J. Cullerton
Senate President
327 State Capitol
Springfield, IL 62706

**Re: LIG Case No. 12-011
Judy Dowis**

Dear President Cullerton:

This summary report of investigation is issued pursuant to Section 25-50(a) of the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act ("the Ethics Act") 5 ILCS 430/1-1 et seq.

**Summary Report of Investigation
5 ILCS 430/25-50(a)**

Nature of Case

The instant matter involves the refusal of Judy Dowis, the Springfield secretary of Senator Maggie Crotty, to cooperate in an investigation undertaken by this office in connection with LIG Case No. 11-017. As the Senate President and leader of the Senate Democratic Caucus, you are the ultimate jurisdictional authority for purposes of receiving this report involving Ms. Dowis. See 5 ILCS 430/25-50. I have also forwarded a copy of this report to Senator Crotty. No misconduct is imputed to Senator Crotty.

Jurisdiction of the Legislative Inspector General

The Legislative Inspector General shall have jurisdiction over the members of the General Assembly and all State employees whose ultimate jurisdictional authority is (i) a

legislative leader, (ii) the Senate Operations Commission, or (iii) the Joint Committee on Legislative Support Services. The jurisdiction of each Legislative Inspector General is to investigate allegations of fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, misconduct, nonfeasance, misfeasance, malfeasance, or violations of this Act or violations of other related laws and rules. 5 ILCS 420/25-5.

Duty of Employees to Cooperate in Investigations

It is the duty of every officer and employee under the jurisdiction of the Legislative Inspector General, including any inspector general serving in any State agency under the jurisdiction of the Legislative Inspector General, to cooperate with the Legislative Inspector General in any investigation undertaken pursuant to this Act. Failure to cooperate with an investigation of the Legislative Inspector General is grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal. Nothing in this Section limits or alters a person's existing rights or privileges under State or federal law. 5 ILCS 430/25-70.

Background

Prior to assuming her current duties on behalf of Senator Crotty, Ms. Dowis was employed by the House Majority where she was assigned to Representative Daniel Burke among others. After Ms. Dowis left the House to work for Senator Crotty, this office received allegations that General Assembly Scholarships awarded by Representative Burke to Sarah Rae Dowis (Sarah) for the academic years 2003-04, 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 for tuition waivers at Southern Illinois University may have been issued in violation of law and contrary to supporting documentation submitted by the Representative's office to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). Sarah is the daughter of Judy Dowis.

The provisions of Section 30-9 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/30-9), which authorize members of the General Assembly to nominate individuals for tuition waivers to State universities, limit the awards to students residing within the member's district. In order for the student to receive a tuition waiver, the member is required to complete and submit a nomination form to the ISBE. This form is required to be signed and submitted by the member with a Waiver of Confidentiality form signed by the recipient under oath specifying, among other information, the student's domicile address. 105 ILCS 5/30-12.5

The paperwork submitted by Representative Burke's office to the ISBE for each of the four years in question listed Sarah's address as 5729 S. Homan in Chicago. However, news reports indicate that Sarah actually resided in Chatham with her family at the time the scholarships were awarded. The 5729 S. Homan address belongs to the parents of Representative Burke's Chicago legislative secretary, Terri Sanchez.

As part of my investigation into the matter, I requested an interview with Ms. Dowis. Although Ms. Dowis initially agreed to meet with me, I subsequently received telephone calls from Ms. Dowis' attorney, Scott Seder. Initially, Mr. Seder sought to discuss the procedures to be followed for the interview. In a subsequent telephone call he informed me that his client would not be cooperating with my investigation. Although I drew his attention to Section 25-70 which mandates cooperation, he advised that his client nonetheless would not be cooperating. Thereafter, I received a letter from Mr. Seder confirming that "Ms. Judy Dowis, has respectfully declined [my] Office's request for her to participate in an interview with [my] office".

Findings and Recommendations

Founded - I have determined that reasonable cause exists to believe that Judy Dowis is in violation of Section 25-70 of the Ethics Act (5 ILCS 430/25-70) by refusing to cooperate in an investigation undertaken by the LIG pursuant to the Ethics Act

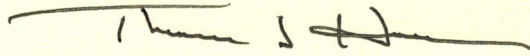
Recommendation - The Legislative Inspector General recommends that the employment of Judy Dowis be terminated.

Leader's Duty to Respond Within 20 Days

Pursuant to Section 25-50 of the Ethics Act (5 ILCS 430/25-50), you are required to respond to this summary report in writing within 20 days. Your response is to include a description of any corrective or disciplinary action to be imposed. Feel free to contact me should you wish to discuss the matter and my recommendation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Respectfully submitted,



Thomas J. Homer
Legislative Inspector General

cc: Senator Maggie Crotty
Eric Madiar, Senate Majority Ethics Officer (via email)