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IG investigation exposes 4 double-dipping state employees

Written by Leslie Turk
 Thursday, 06 May 2010

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Surely, nobody in state government works this many hours. A Louisiana inspector general investigation uncovered four people in state government who have been holding down two full-time government positions. And breaking the law in the process.

Inspector General Stephen Street Thursday issued the results of a review of all positions in the executive branch of state government for possible dual employment. The investigation, according to Street, was prompted by an early 2009 story in *The Advocate*.

Street explains that the holding of two or more full-time positions simultaneously within state government or its political subdivisions is prohibited by state law. In addition, the scheduled hours of the dual positions for these employees overlap, Street notes, raising questions of whether the employees actually worked all the hours they were paid for. The annual salary of the lower paying positions for these four employees was approximately \$177,000.

In early 2009, *The Advocate* published a story on state employees with salaries of \$70,000 or more. Street says concerns were raised after his office read the story and noted that some of the employees were listed as holding more than one position in state government. "Due to concerns from this observation, we conducted a review of the entire executive branch of state government as of November 2009," the IG's report notes. The office found that several of the positions identified in the news report as full-time were actually part-time positions, but it did identify the following four people who held two full-time positions in state government:

- Samantha Ackers - employed by both Baton Rouge Community College (salary \$47,000) and the Governor's Office on Mental Health Advocacy Services (salary \$36,275.20)
- Sharon Shelmire - employed by both the Baton Rouge Housing Authority (salary \$43,264) and University of New Orleans (salary \$32,000)
- Betty Carter - employed by both LSU Interim Public Hospital (salary

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\$86,382.40) and Delgado Community College (salary \$55,491.20)

- Coletha Riley - employed by both LSU Interim Public Hospital (salary \$94,927.72) and Delgado Community College (salary \$53,127.40)

The report indicates that at times the responsibilities of these positions may have conflicted, forcing the employees to choose performance of the responsibilities of one position over the responsibilities of the other. For example:

- The schedules for Samantha Ackers provided by the Baton Rouge Community College and the Governor’s Office on Mental Health Advocacy Services show that Ms. Ackers was supposed to be at both locations on Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons for the fall semester in 2009.
- The schedules for Sharon Shelmire provided by the Baton Rouge Housing Authority and the University of New Orleans both required Ms. Shelmire to be present from 8 a.m. until noon on Monday – Friday.

After the inquiry began, Ackers resigned from her position with the Mental Health Advocacy Center and was terminated from her position with Baton Rouge Community College. Shelmire resigned from her position with the Baton Rouge Housing Authority.

“There are several things wrong with holding two full-time jobs at the same time with the state and its political subdivisions,” Street says. “First, it’s flatly prohibited by law. Second, at a time when state employees are being laid off and their positions eliminated, it erodes the public’s confidence in government as a whole. And, third, in at least two specific situations that we identified, individuals took steps to try to conceal their dual employment status from their employers.”

Noting that “taxpayers deserve better,” the inspector general concludes with the obvious: “It is a fact of life that when a person is trying to hold down two full-time jobs, he isn’t at his most productive at either one of those jobs.”

Street makes two recommendations that should end the dual employment of any of the employees whose status was brought to light -- and result in the repayment of money for hours that were not actually worked.

Read the full report [here](#).

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written by **Did the Math** , May 10, 2010

The four lower salaries for each employee total up to \$ 176,893.80, and all I used was a calculator. Not rocket science.

...

written by **Johnny** , May 10, 2010

Interesting that it took nearly a year to hit the news, but then I guess the state takes its own sweet time, and None, I repeat NONE, of these dual position holders total salary approaches \$177,000.00. What's up with that? I have a calculator for rent real cheap. "Street explains that the holding of two or more full-time positions simultaneously within state government or its political subdivisions is prohibited by state law. In addition, the scheduled hours of the dual positions for these employees overlap, Street notes, raising questions of whether the employees actually worked all the hours they were paid for. The annual salary of the lower paying positions for these four employees was approximately \$177,000.

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- Coletha Riley - employed by both LSU Interim Public Hospital (salary \$94,927.72) and Delgado Community College (salary \$53,127.40)"

Y'all come back now hear...

...

written by Drone Attack , May 08, 2010

They work real hard, they deserve extra money, after all, they are government employees and they are here to help us.

...

written by original northsidian , May 06, 2010

Don't tell me. Suspended with pay pending investigation. Only in Louisiana!! Vacation pay for stealing, go figure!!

...

written by HARDHAT , May 06, 2010

Once Upon At Time in Louisiana! I would venture to analyze this problem as being a racial orgin problem.....

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written by Morrow , May 06, 2010

Congrats to the Inspector General & those bright, observant employees who noticed this and had the testosterone to do something about it! Its refreshing to know there are people working with integrity and principles.

...

written by Morrow , May 06, 2010

I have NEVER had much faith in Governor Raj's administration. This is no shock to me. That there are people employed by the state with this kind of moronic mentality, is no great shock. Line 'em up and lock them up!!! I believe absolutely these people knew what they were doing was wrong and didn't care - thought they were above the law. Good thing they made such good money 'cause criminal attorneys can cost a fortune to keep you out of jail! Hey, lock up their supervisors too!

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