



State of Louisiana

**OFFICE OF  
STATE INSPECTOR GENERAL**

**OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**BATON ROUGE REGION**

**MISUSE OF STATE VEHICLE**

**Report by**

**Inspector General Bill Lynch**

**Prepared for**

**Governor M. J. "Mike" Foster, Jr.**

**June 17, 2002**

**File No. 1-02-0078**



State of Louisiana

OFFICE OF  
STATE INSPECTOR GENERAL

Office of Community Services

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May 16, 2002

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# Office of Community Services Baton Rouge Region Misuse of State Vehicle

Patricia Diggs, a supervisor at the Baton Rouge Regional Office of Community Services, used a state vehicle while on sick leave to visit her dentist in New Orleans, in violation of state law and policy which prohibit such personal use of state property, and exposed the state to unnecessary liability.

## Background

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The Baton Rouge Regional Office of Community Services (OCS) is an agency providing child protection, foster care and adoption services to those eligible. It is within the Department of Social Services. Carmen Weisner is the OCS assistant secretary, and Mary Hessick is the regional administrator.

Patricia Diggs, a longtime OCS employee, is a district supervisor. Yolanda Williams, an employee under her supervision, is responsible for providing transportation for certain clients.

## Misuse of state vehicle

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On Oct. 24, 2001, Ms. Williams, as part of her duties, used a state vehicle to deliver luggage to a foster child in New Orleans. Ms. Diggs, who was on sick leave and not

on state business, accompanied her so she could visit her dentist, a few miles out of the way for Ms. Williams.

Although the vehicle log completed by Ms. Williams did not reflect the visit to the dentist, Ms. Diggs did instruct Ms. Williams, her subordinate, to drive her to the dentist office.

Payroll records show that on Oct. 24, 2001, Ms. Diggs was at work from 8:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m., then on sick leave for the rest of the workday. According to the dentist office, she visited the dentist at 3 p.m. Since Ms. Diggs was not on duty when she used the state vehicle to visit her dentist, this exposed the state to unnecessary liability.

According to OCS management, agency policy requires that state vehicles be used for official business only.

La. R.S. 42:1461 requires any public employee to “assume a personal obligation not to misappropriate, misapply, convert, misuse, or otherwise wrongfully take any funds, property, or other thing of value belonging to or under the custody or control of the public entity in which they hold office or are employed.”

Also, it was improper for Ms. Diggs to instruct a subordinate to drive her in the state vehicle to her dentist.

Ms. Diggs admitted it was improper for her to use the state vehicle in such a manner.

Ms. Hessick, the regional administrator, said Ms. Diggs appeared to handle the situation improperly, and she would review the matter.

### *Conclusions:*

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1. Baton Rouge Regional OCS supervisor Patricia Diggs used a state vehicle as transportation to her dentist’s office in New Orleans, in violation of state law and agency policy which prohibit such personal use of a state vehicle.
2. Ms. Diggs was not on duty, but was on sick leave when she used the state vehicle to visit her dentist, which exposed the state to unnecessary liability.
3. It was improper for Ms. Diggs to instruct her subordinate to drive her in the state vehicle to the dentist.

*Recommendation:*

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2. Management at OCS should take appropriate action concerning Ms. Diggs' misuse of the state vehicle.

*Responses:*

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Attached are responses from OCS Assistant Secretary Carmen Weisner and Patricia Diggs.

BL/JW

File No. 1-02-0078



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Department of Social Services  
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M. J. "MIKE" FOSTER, JR.  
GOVERNOR

GWENDOLYN P. HAMILTON  
SECRETARY

May 13, 2002

Mr. Bill Lynch  
Office of State Inspector General  
State Capitol Annex  
Post Office Box 94095  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802

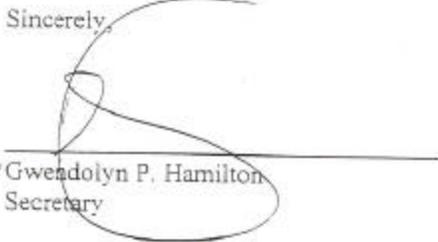
RE: Draft Report on Patricia Diggs

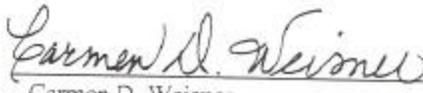
Dear Mr. Lynch:

Please refer to the draft report on the above referenced Department of Social Services employee, submitted to us on May 7, 2002. We appreciate your office making us aware of this situation. Please be assured we will follow up with appropriate action.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this report.

Sincerely,

*for*   
Gwendolyn P. Hamilton  
Secretary

  
Carmen D. Weisner  
Assistant Secretary

GPH:CDW:JM:rb



**State of Louisiana**

**Department of Social Services  
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**M. J. "MIKE" FOSTER, JR.**  
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SECRETARY

May 15, 2002

Mr. Bill Lynch  
State Inspector General  
P. O. Box 94095  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9095

Attention: Mr. Jim D. Wilsford

RE: File No. 1-02-0078

Dear Mr. Wilsford:

In response to your draft letter of May 15, 2002, this response is written.

I accept responsibility for the improper use of the state vehicle. I recognize that the use of the State vehicle for non-official business was not a wise choice. I assure you that such use of the state vehicle will not occur again.

Thank you again for the professional manner in the handling of this investigation.

Sincerely

*Patricia A. Robinson-Diggs*

Patricia A. Robinson-Diggs  
Social Services District Supervisor  
Baton Rouge Region OCS