



Investigations of Improper Activities by State Agencies and Employees

Waste and Inefficiency, Improper Hiring, and Other Improper Governmental Activities

Background

The California Whistleblower Protection Act (Whistleblower Act) empowers the California State Auditor (State Auditor) to investigate allegations of improper governmental activities by state agencies and employees. The Whistleblower Act defines an improper governmental activity as an action by a state agency or employee during the performance of official duties that violates a law; is economically wasteful; or involves gross misconduct, incompetence, or inefficiency. Since 1993, when the State Auditor activated the Whistleblower hotline, we have identified improper governmental activities that have cost the State hundreds of millions of dollars.

Key Findings

From January 2023 through December 2023, our office conducted investigative work on more than 1,000 allegations of improper governmental activities. This report details the results of eight substantiated allegations involving several state agencies. Below are some of the wrongful activities we have included in this report.

» A Department of Health Care Services accounting supervisor failed to promptly deposit a check in the amount of nearly \$875,000. The accounting supervisor's failure to promptly deposit the check violated state policy and was economically wasteful, depriving the State from using the funds for other departmental needs during the last two years. Had our office not received and investigated the complaint, Health Care Services likely would not have followed up on the check and could have forfeited the opportunity to recoup the funds.

- » A manager from an unnamed department engaged in gross misconduct when he advised paid clients on how to fraudulently obtain state jobs. For approximately 20 years, the manager operated a personal business helping individuals obtain state employment that resulted in unlawful appointments for at least three state employees we identified. Further, the manager used his own methods to unlawfully obtain state positions for himself when he misrepresented his experience and qualifications on several state employment applications.
- » A chief information security officer from an unnamed department improperly disclosed to a candidate personal information about multiple other candidates for a student assistant position. The personal information included employment histories, dates of birth, addresses, and partial Social Security numbers.

Status of the 1,306 Cases for Which Our Office Conducted Investigative Work January 2023 through December 2023



Source: State Auditor.