



OFFICE OF THE LEGISLATIVE INSPECTOR GENERAL

---

THOMAS J. HOMER  
420 Stratton Building, Springfield, IL 62706  
217/558-1560 Phone • 217/558-1566 Fax  
E-Mail: tomh@ilga.gov

METRA MEDIA RESPONSE

April 9, 2014

I have received a number of press inquiries late this afternoon relative to a letter from the Speaker's legal counsel directed to three members of the General Assembly in connection with the Metra affair. Rather than attempt to address each of your questions separately, I thought it might be helpful if I were to issue this written response.

I am not allowed to comment on specific cases or investigations conducted by my office, as there are strict confidentiality provisions in the State Ethics Act. See 5 ILCS 430/25-90. However, I am able to discuss the procedures that we follow in all cases. When a complaint is made or I decide to look into a matter that comes to my attention, I first must seek approval from the Legislative Ethics Commission to Investigate. Assuming that I am granted such permission, at the conclusion of my investigation, I present my findings to the Commission and inform the members as to whether I found a violation of any ethics rules or laws. If I find there is a violation of the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act, I may also refer the matter to the Attorney General for the filing of a formal complaint. On the other hand, where I conclude that the evidence is insufficient, I inform the Commission of my decision to close the investigation and provide the basis for that decision. In coming to my decision I

may only consider whether existing laws and ethics rules have been violated. **Although I can recommend new laws to address what I believe to be inappropriate conduct by legislators, enforcement actions are limited to violations of existing laws and rules.** A decision to close an investigation based on insufficient evidence does not constitute a good housekeeping seal of approval or a best practices award. Moreover, closure does not bar the Inspector General from resuming the investigation if circumstances warrant. I hope this helps to address your questions.

In the next few days I will be submitting proposals to the General Assembly urging reform of the laws affecting patronage, conflicts of interests by legislators, the need for greater transparency and related matters.

Thomas J. Homer  
Legislative Inspector General  
420 Stratton Building  
Springfield, IL 62706