



Dave Yost • Auditor of State

Bulletin 2012-003

Auditor of State Bulletin

Date Re-Issued: April 4, 2012

TO: All Public Offices
Community Schools

FROM: Dave Yost, Ohio Auditor of State

SUBJECT: House Bill 66 – Fraud Hotline

In 2003, then Auditor of State Betty Montgomery created the Auditor of State's fraud hotline. The hotline was established as a way for all Ohioans to report potential fraud throughout government. Since its inception, not a week passes without the Auditor of State's office receiving tips or complaints.

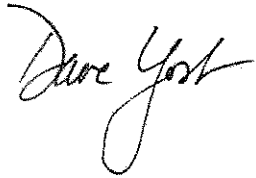
Recently passed legislation House Bill 66 (HB 66) makes several changes to the Auditor of State's fraud hotline. The bill requires the Auditor of State to maintain a system for the reporting of fraud, including misuse of public money by any public official or office. The system allows all Ohio citizens the opportunity to make anonymous complaints through a toll-free telephone number, the Auditor of State's website, or through the United States' mail.

The Auditor of State is required to keep a log of all complaints filed. The log is a public record under Section 149.43 of the Revised Code and must contain the following: the date the complaint was received, a general description of the nature of the complaint, the name of the public office or agency with regard to which the complaint is directed, and a general description of the status of the review by the Auditor's office. Information in the log may be redacted if Section 149.43 of the Revised Code or another statute provides an applicable exemption. During the course of Auditor of State investigations, information will be redacted pursuant to Section 149.43(A)(2) in order to conduct thorough investigations.

The new legislation also has a direct impact on all public employers. On the bill's effective date, May 4, 2012, public offices, including community schools, must make their employees aware of the fraud-reporting system. Public offices also must provide information about the fraud reporting system to all new hires. All new employees must confirm that they received this information within thirty days after beginning employment.

Section 117.103 requires the Auditor of State to confirm that public offices have so notified new employees. The statute provides two ways to verify compliance. First, public offices may require new employees to sign forms acknowledging the employees were notified of the fraud-reporting system. The Auditor of State has created a model form, which is appended to this Bulletin and may be found on the Auditor of State website. Alternatively, public offices may consider providing the fraud reporting system information in the employee manual for the public office. The employee should sign and verify the employee's receipt of such a manual. This option satisfies the bill's requirements on public employers.

Finally, the legislation also extends the current whistle-blower protections contained in Section 124.341 of the Revised Code to employees who file a complaint with the new fraud-reporting system. If a classified or unclassified employee becomes aware of a situation and reports it to the Auditor of State's fraud-reporting system, the employee is protected against certain retaliatory or disciplinary actions. If retaliatory or disciplinary action is taken against the employee, the employee has the right to appeal with the State Personnel Board of Review.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave Yost". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "D".

Dave Yost
Ohio Auditor of State

Example language regarding the Auditor of State's fraud reporting-system

The Ohio Auditor of State's office maintains a system for the reporting of fraud, including misuse of public money by any official or office. The system allows all Ohio citizens, including public employees, the opportunity to make anonymous complaints through a toll free number, the Auditor of State's website, or through the United States mail.

Auditor of State's fraud contact information:

Telephone: 1-866-FRAUD OH (1-866-372-8364)

US Mail: Ohio Auditor of State's office
Special Investigations Unit
88 East Broad Street
P.O. Box 1140
Columbus, OH 43215

Web: www.ohioauditor.gov