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TONI PRECKWINKLE

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OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT INSPECTOR GENERAL

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July 12, 2012

**Via Hand Delivery**

Honorable Toni Preckwinkle  
President, Cook County Board of Commissioners  
118 N. Clark Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60602

Re: Recommendations Concerning County Contractors and Procurement Issues

Dear President Preckwinkle:

This letter is written to request your consideration of two recommendations relating to Cook County contractors and procurement activities. These recommendations serve to extend existing policies covering Cook County employees to Cook County contractors and the procurement process in order to further the goals of transparency and accountability in Cook County government.

First, we recommend that a policy, resolution or amendment to the Code of Ordinances be enacted to require Cook County employees to report instances in which they are contacted by a politically-related person or organization if that contact involves an attempt to inquire about or affect a procurement action. Employees could report such contacts on a political contact log similar to the one that you distributed to all employees on April 18, 2011 except that the form would be modified to indicate that it relates to procurement activity rather than employment action. Procurement action would be defined to include not only the awarding of contracts, but also extending contracts, changing terms in contracts, requiring the hiring of certain subcontractors and any other activity involving the procurement process. This new policy would require employees to report, for example, any instance in which they are contacted by an elected official seeking to have a contract awarded to a particular contractor. The goal is to prevent politics from entering not only the employment process but also the procurement process.

Second, we recommend that the Independent Inspector General Ordinance and the Procurement Code be amended to impose a duty on Cook County contractors and related entities to report corruption, political discrimination and other criminal activity in the same manner that Cook County government employees are currently required to do. This can be accomplished by



amending Section 2-285(f) of the Independent Inspector General Ordinance and Sections 34-174 and 34-250 of the Procurement Code as reflected on the following proposed amendments:

### PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

#### **INDEPENDENT INSPECTOR GENERAL ORDINANCE**

##### **Sec. 2-285. - Cooperation.**

(f) It shall be the duty of ~~every employee of the County~~ all County employees, officials, agents, contractors, subcontractors, licensees, grantees or persons or businesses seeking County contracts, grants, licenses, or certification of eligibility for County contracts to report, directly and without undue delay, to the Independent Inspector General any and all information concerning conduct which they know to involve corruption, allegations of political discrimination in nonexempt positions or other criminal activity, by another County employee or official, which concerns his or her office of employment. The knowing failure of any employee to report as required above shall constitute cause for discipline up to and including termination. For purposes of this section, a report made to the Inspector General Hotline shall be considered a direct report.

#### **PROCUREMENT CODE**

##### **Sec. 34-174. - Disqualification for willful violation of Cook County Independent Inspector General Ordinance.**

A Person found to have willfully failed to cooperate ~~in an investigation by~~ with and report misconduct to the Cook County Independent Inspector General as required by the Section 2-285 of the Independent Inspector General Ordinance shall be subject to disqualification as provided in Chapter 2, Article H IV, Section 2-291 of the Code.

##### **Sec. 34-250. - Reporting irregularities.**

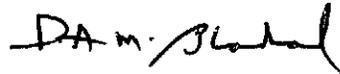
~~The Board encourages any~~ Any Person involved in the procurement process, including employees and Contractors and those seeking to become Contractors, shall ~~to~~ report any suspected or known irregularities in the County's procurement process to the County Compliance Officer of the Office of the Cook County Inspector General. In addition to any applicable laws protecting whistleblowers, the County shall ensure that a report made in good faith will not result in any adverse action taken by the Board or the County against the Person making such a report.

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The CPO's procedures will include a mechanism to publish this provision to all appropriate Persons.

Thank you for your time and consideration to this matter. If you have any questions, require additional information or wish to discuss these issues further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,



Patrick M. Blanchard  
Inspector General

cc: Hon. Jerry Butler  
Hon. John P. Daley, Chairman of the Finance Committee  
Hon. Gregg Goslin  
Hon. Peter N. Silvestri  
Mr. Kurt Summers, Jr., Chief of Staff  
Ms. Laura Lechowicz Felicione, Special Assistant to the President  
Mr. Tariq Malhance, Chief Financial Officer  
Ms. Lourdes Coss, Chief Procurement Officer