



## UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 21, 2015

### OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

#### MEMORANDUM

**To:** Kim C. Dine  
Chief of Police

**From:** Fay F. Ropella, CPA, CFE *[Signature]* FOR  
Inspector General

**Subject:** *Management Advisory Report: United States Capitol Police Wage Garnishment Process (Report Number: OIG-2016-03)*

In December 2015, an officer alleged that the United States Capitol Police (USCP or the Department) did not follow appropriate laws and regulations related to garnishment of wages. Based on interviews and review of documentation the officer provided, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) performed limited procedures to determine the merit of the allegation.

We limited the scope of work to focus on the specific aspect of the garnishment process identified by the complainant, which included reviewing documents the complainant provided, reviewing current USCP standard operating procedures (SOPs), and compliance with those SOPs. We specifically inquired about Office of Human Resource (OHR) processes for handling court-ordered garnishments. We also obtained information from the National Finance Center (NFC) regarding garnishment procedures and reviewed court records available on the Internet. Because the nature and brevity of this assessment precluded use of our normal protocols, OIG did not conduct this review in accordance with *Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards*. Had we followed those standards, other matters might have come to our attention.

As of December 11, 2015, OHR did not have written guidelines or SOPs related to properly handling garnishment of wages. In addition, as of December 2015 OHR did not have a process for requesting legal review of garnishment documentation prior to instructing that NFC begin withholding funds from an employee's wages. As a result, NFC removed funds from the officer's wages without the required documentation. However, the NFC Web site clearly states an agency must first have garnishment orders reviewed by its legal department to ensure that the orders conform to regulations. OHR could have avoided the officer's complaint if the Office of General Counsel had conducted a legal review of the officer's case before OHR instructed NFC to remove money from the officer's wages without the required documentation.



***Court-Ordered Judgment Amounts and Related Interest***

Judgment Amounts	Principle	Interest	Additional Interest	Garnishment Cost	Total
Account 1	\$ 8,518.31	\$ 1,910.41			\$ 10,428.72
Account 2	\$ 20,765.70	\$ 4,370.70			\$ 25,136.40
Additional Interest			\$ 2,792.01		\$ 2,792.01
Garnishment Cost				\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00
Judgement Total	\$ 29,284.01	\$ 6,281.11	\$ 2,792.01	\$ 50.00	\$ 38,407.13

Source: OIG generated from court-ordered judgment amounts

According to OHR personnel, it had only the writ for account number 1. In addition, OHR personnel did not request the required legal review of the documents before instructing that NFC withhold funds from the officer's pay. OHR subsequently instructed NFC to withhold the additional amounts without the appropriate court documentation. OIG performed sample compound interest calculations to assess the reasonableness of the interest accrued. No exceptions were noted and represented the judgment interest rate of 10 percent.

At the request of OHR, the creditor's attorney provided the required documentation in September 2015. The officer on two previous occasions filed motions with the Circuit Court of Prince George's County in Maryland to vacate the judgment of wage garnishment. The attorney for the creditor filed an opposition to the defendant's motion on March 4, 2015. The opposition's motion reiterated the Court's original order, which supported the total amount. Any further review of the legality of the writ should be between the court and the officer. Without the appropriate SOPs and legal review of documentation, USCP could have inappropriately withheld wages from an individual's pay. Thus, OIG recommends the following:

**Recommendation 1:** We recommend that the United States Capitol Police develop more efficient and effective controls over accountability of the garnishment program by immediately developing standard operating procedures that provide detailed guidance to Office of Human Resources personnel.

**Recommendation 2:** We recommend that the United States Capitol Police comply with the National Finance Center's guidance for obtaining legal review court documents prior to the Office of Human Resources requesting wage garnishments.

cc: Assistant Chief Matthew R. Verderosa, Chief of Operations  
Mr. Richard Braddock, Chief Administrative Officer  
Ms. Gretchen DeMar, General Counsel  
[REDACTED] Audit Liaison