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Governor Christie Creates Investigative Unit to Root Out Pension and Benefits Fraud and Abuse

Wednesday, August 07, 2013 Tags: [Pension and Benefits](#)

Trenton, NJ – Building on his commitment to ensure the long-term recovery and solvency of New Jersey’s public employee pension system, Governor Chris Christie today issued an Executive Order creating the Pension Fraud and Abuse Unit. As part of the state Treasury Department, the Unit will detect pension and disability fraud and ineligibility, as well as facilitate civil and criminal prosecutions where appropriate.

The Unit will be headed by Jim Scott, a highly experienced former Internal Revenue Service criminal investigator, who will move from the Attorney General’s Office, where he currently investigates public corruption and white-collar crime, to the Treasury Department. Scott will report to state Treasurer Andrew Sidamon-Eristoff

“We’ve taken historic, bipartisan action to fix a broken public pension system that would have been insolvent in a matter of years without bold intervention. This is a serious and significant new step to protect the integrity of the system and guard every taxpayer dollar and employee contribution from fraud and abuse,” said Governor Christie. “Siphoning of pension and disability benefits by fraud or ineligibility hurts everyone, including honest current and future pensioners and, above all, New Jersey taxpayers who support the system and expect it to be fair and free of fraud.”

Executive Order No.138 takes effect today with the Governor’s signature. The Treasurer will appoint and assign investigators and other employees to the Unit to investigate public pension claims and payments, including disability pension claims and claims of improper participation in the retirement systems.

Governor Christie and other members of his senior staff and Cabinet who previously worked with the Governor in the U.S. Attorney’s Office relied on Scott as an investigator in major public corruption and white-collar criminal investigations.

“Jim is one of the many smart, methodical and thorough investigative agents I had the pleasure to work with as United States Attorney. I expect good things from him. He is extremely well-suited and highly qualified for this important role in my Administration to protect the pension and benefits system for state employees and New Jersey taxpayers,” said Governor Christie.

The Pension Fraud and Abuse Unit will work closely and coordinate with the Division of Pensions and Benefits in the Treasury Department and the Attorney General’s Office and will also take referrals from the Office of the State Comptroller, under Matt Boxer. Those agencies, according to Governor Christie’s Executive Order, will “undertake investigations, share information and resources, develop strategies for curtailing fraud and abuse, and identify cases for civil and criminal prosecution.” The Unit will recommend all civil and criminal remedies available under the law and petition the appropriate boards as needed for denial of a pension or disability application or revocation of an improperly granted benefit. The agencies will meet regularly to coordinate and ensure maximum cooperation in their work.

The Pension Fraud and Abuse Unit will also encourage the public to report fraudulent pension and benefit claims and payments. It will maintain a website, mailing address and toll-free number to take such reports from the public. The Unit is also authorized to call upon the expertise and assistance of all state departments and agencies to carry out its mission – including the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Treasury, Motor Vehicle Commission and others.

A copy of the Governor’s Executive Order No.138 [pdf 30kB]

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