



## INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT

2005-05-0271-B

October 19, 2006

VANEETA KUMAR

*Indiana Inspector General David O. Thomas, after an investigation by Special Agent Alan McElroy and Staff Attorney Amanda Schaeffer, reports as follows:*

### I.

This case involves a former Deputy Commissioner of the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), Vaneeta Kumar, who held a political fundraising event for Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson at her home in Indianapolis, Indiana.

### II.

Vaneeta Kumar served as INDOT Deputy Commissioner for approximately three years. During that time, on August 10, 2003, Kumar held a political fundraising event for Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson at her home in Marion County, Indiana. Invitations to the event were sent by Kumar and her family, listing Kumar's personal address and telephone number on the invitations.

RSVPs were to be made to Kumar. A suggested contribution was printed on the face of the invitations.

Individuals present at Kumar's fundraising event included persons employed by contracting firms that did business with INDOT. The firms represented at the party were RW Armstrong, the Corradino Group, DCZ and GRW. These firms had a business relationship with INDOT in that they bid and competed for contracting jobs with INDOT. These firms received invitations to attend the fundraiser at Kumar's home and brought financial contributions.

Kumar also personally telephoned and invited at least one individual from the Corradino Group.

In the summer of 2003, before Kumar's fundraising event, former INDOT Commissioner Bryan Nicol held a similar fundraising event for Mayor Bart Peterson at his home in Indianapolis. Kumar was the co-host for this event and also was aware that individuals representing various contracting firms who did business with INDOT were present at Nicol's party.

### III.

The Indiana Office of Inspector General (OIG) has jurisdiction over this matter under IC 4-2-7-3(3), which states that the OIG shall receive complaints alleging a violation of the Indiana Code of Ethics.

In August of 2003, 42 IAC 2-1-7.1 (currently 42 IAC 1-5-4), the Political Activity Rule, stated in relevant part: "A state employee . . . shall not solicit

political contributions at any time from persons whom the employee . . . knows to have a business relationship with the employee's . . . agency.”

Vaneeta Kumar was a state employee on August 10, 2003 and therefore is subject to the jurisdiction of the OIG and the Indiana Code of Ethics.

The Inspector General is also responsible for addressing fraud, waste, abuse, and wrongdoing in state agencies under IC 4-2-7-2(b).

#### IV.

Kumar contested the complaint filed by the OIG with the Ethics Commission in a full hearing in August of 2006. The Ethics Commission on October 12, 2006 issued findings and a ruling that Kumar violated the Indiana Code of Ethics and that the OIG complaint was proven.

The Ethics Commission further fined Kumar in the amount of \$6,100.

Dated this 19<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2006.



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David O. Thomas  
Indiana Inspector General