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**Indiana Inspector General Investigation**  
*Hendricks County Prosecutor Reaches Plea Deal with Former DOC Employee*

INDIANAPOLIS (Oct. 9, 2026) – The Indiana Office of Inspector General’s work has landed another sentencing for a second former employee of the Indiana Department of Correction.

The Hendricks County prosecutor has reached a plea agreement with Sandra Vargas, who was charged with level 6 felonies for official misconduct, fraud, and theft in May of 2025. The charges were the result of an investigation conducted by the OIG, with full cooperation from the DOC.

The charges alleged that Vargas, a former correctional officer at the DOC's Plainfield Correctional Facility, knowingly accepted pay for hours she did not work. The hours were submitted by her supervisor and romantic partner, Jacob Kauth, who approved false time records on her behalf. Allegedly Vargas continued to accept the 98 hours of falsified time without reporting it, resulting in a loss to the state of \$3,163.90 in gross overpayments.

Vargas’ actions were uncovered after a DOC audit found that Vargas did not enter the facility on multiple dates and had not submitted proper time slips. Vargas was terminated from DOC on June 18, 2024.

The Hendricks County prosecutor reached a plea agreement with Vargas on Oct. 5, 2026, including pleading guilty to fraud, which was entered as an alternative misdemeanor. All other counts were dismissed. As part of the sentence, Vargas was ordered to repay the state \$3,163.90 in restitution, jointly and severally with co-defendant Kauth, who reached a plea agreement in the case on Aug. 31, 2026.

“Accepting pay for hours not worked, and staying silent about it, is a breach of the public’s trust,” said Indiana Inspector General Jared Prentice. “This outcome, including an order to repay the state, reflects the importance of accountability. Our office will continue partnering with agencies and county prosecutors to protect taxpayer money and resources.”

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**About the Indiana Office of Inspector General**

The role of the Inspector General and staff is to reduce fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement and wrongdoing in state executive branch agencies. Through education, advice, investigations, prosecutions and legislative recommendations, the Inspector General fosters a culture of integrity that contributes to public confidence – supporting Governor Mike Braun’s focus on a more transparent, accountable and efficient state government.