

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

ED QUATREVAUX, INSPECTOR GENERAL



September 16, 2013

Patricia P. Brister, President
St Tammany Parish
PO Box 628
Covington LA 70434

Ms. Brister,

Thank you for your letter. I wish you could have stayed to hear my comments instead of relying on a reporter's summary and hearsay. As has also been reported, my comments were **not** directed to public officials, but rather to "employees, contractors, elected officials and the public."

My statement was accurate: the world is full of liars and thieves. Fraud is theft by deceit (lying). In 2012, investigations by federal Offices of Inspector General (OIGs) resulted in 5,374 successful prosecutions, which produced investigative recoveries of \$10.4 billion. (<http://www.ignet.gov/randp/230-151cigieweb.pdf>)

On the local scene, three members of the New Orleans City Council, a seven-seat body, have plead or been convicted of federal corruption charges since Katrina. The City's Chief Technology Officer plead guilty to taking bribes from a businessman who was found guilty on 52 counts and sentenced to 17 years in prison. The French Market Corporation Director used his city credit card for personal purposes, as did the former Chairman of the Aviation Board who made a \$20,000 contribution to a charity on his Aviation Board credit card. A judge's 18 family members worked in the court he presided over, and he engaged the Sheriff's wife as a sole source contractor about the same time the Sheriff engaged his wife to provide real estate assessments. And the previous mayor has been indicted on federal corruption charges.

Perhaps there is no corruption in St. Tammany Parish, but the citizens apparently do not think so. The voters are not stupid, so why not put the question to them in the form of a simple charter amendment that authorized an OIG and sets a funding level based on the government's annual budget. If the voters decide they do not want an OIG, there would be no need to engage in a lengthy task force process. If the voters approved, then each governing authority would decide whether their governmental unit would participate along with the parish. Drafters of implementing legislation could look to the federal Inspector General Act, model legislation posted on the Association of Inspectors General website, or the New Orleans ordinance for guidance.

And if the voters of Slidell or another city did not wish to join the parish and other cities in an inspector general program, they would pay nothing. They also would not benefit from

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proactive internal audit and investigation oversight, management consulting and evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the programs administered by the City of Slidell.

Crooks make governments a target because governments are both lucrative and vulnerable. We are working to make New Orleans a hard target by improving controls, monitoring procurements, maintaining a system of more than 100 citizens who serve as our eyes and ears, and, of course, by conducting investigations that lead to indictments and convictions. NOLA OIG investigations led to twelve convictions and thirteen indictments in 2012, and interrupted fraud schemes that would have cost taxpayers \$10 million. You can see all NOLA OIG reports at www.nolaoig.org.

Anyone who does not believe that corruption is a serious problem for most governments is either uninformed, naïve or both.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'E. Quatrevaux', located below the text.