



## Office of the Inspector General Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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### **Inspector General's Office Part of Combined Probe Leading to Indictment of Lawrence Officials, September 2012**

Two top Lawrence city officials were indicted on corruption charges in a case investigated by staff from the Massachusetts Inspector General's office, the State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The charges were brought by Essex County District Attorney Jonathan Blodgett in a lengthy and ongoing investigation being conducted in concert with the U.S. Attorney's office.

According to the indictment, Leonard Degnan of North Andover, the former chief of staff for Lawrence Mayor William Lantigua, used his position to induce an executive at a trash disposal contractor to donate one of the firm's trucks to a community in the Dominican Republic. The trash disposal firm had a contract with the city of Lawrence. Degnan faces conspiracy, extortion, and bribery charges.

Lawrence Deputy Police Chief Melix Bonilla faces several charges, including extortion, conspiracy and fraudulent conversion of city property, for transferring 13 vehicles owned by the Lawrence Police Department to a firm closely affiliated with Mayor Lantigua. In April 2012, the Inspector General wrote a letter describing the transaction in great detail and notified Mayor Lantigua that the transfers violated state procurement law. According to the indictment, Bonilla also used his position as Deputy Chief to compel another person to complete the vehicle transfers against that person's will and misled the Lawrence Police Chief.

For more information see the Essex District Attorney's press release -- [Lawrence City Officials Indicted - Essex District Attorney Press Release 9-11-12.](#)