April 24, 2013

Members of the Legislative Audit Committee:

The State Auditor’s Office’s Special Investigations Unit (SIU) investigated allegations that the chief of staff for a member of the House of Representatives had falsified travel vouchers.

The results of the SIU’s investigation led to the Public Integrity Unit of the Travis County District Attorney’s Office obtaining two indictments for John Higgins, Jr. on April 10, 2013. The first indictment charged Mr. Higgins with 11 counts of tampering with governmental record, which is a state jail felony. The second indictment charged Mr. Higgins with one count of securing execution of a document by deception with a value of $1,500 or more but less than $20,000, which is a state jail felony. State jail felonies carry a maximum penalty of two years in a state jail and a fine not to exceed $10,000.

If you have any questions, please contact Ralph Disher, Supervising Investigator, or me at (512) 936-9500.

Sincerely,

John Keel, CPA
State Auditor

cc: The Honorable Rick Perry, Governor of Texas
    Mr. Steven Adrian, House of Representatives, House Business Operations
    The Honorable Rosemary Lehmberg, Travis County District Attorney
    Mr. Gregg Cox, Director, Special Prosecution Division,
    Travis County District Attorney’s Office