

Columbus Institute for Contemporary Journalism

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January 24, 2011

Auditor Dave Yost

Office of Auditor of State

88 East Broad Street – 5th floor

Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Auditor Yost:

Please consider this a reporting of fraud involving federal funds earmarked for poor children to receive free tutoring. Currently, the Auditor of State is auditing Columbus City Schools and will be conducting an audit conference with officials of the public body that is the subject of the audit January 27, 2011 in Executive Session. Please find attached a letter delivered January 22, 2011 to Columbus City School Board President Carol Perkins with copies to fellow Board members.

Along with the attached letter to Board Member Perkins, please find a summary and a number of documents that support allegations and provide direct evidence of multimillion-dollar theft and fraud in the district's No Child Left Behind Supplemental Educational Services (SES) program.

There have been a number of complaints regarding the overriding of management controls in the approval and disbursement of federal funds to SES providers. In addition, the SES Director Joyce Hackett in charge of these funds and the monitoring of the SES providers stated on the video I received that she caught a SES provider creating false records to defraud the federally funded program. The SES vendor who was caught is still on ODE's approved provider listing an address that belongs to a body fitness center.

I received a taped conversation of Board member Hanifah Kambon in agreement with Board member Mike Wiles referring to the actions of district officials as "criminal"; yet, it appears neither Joyce Hackett nor Hanifah Kambon along with Mike Wiles expressed these facts or concerns to the Auditor of State, who is currently auditing Columbus City Schools. (SES Director Joyce Hackett's video and Board member Kambon's taped conversation are enclosed in the attached notebook.)

Furthermore, I came into possession of a number of cancelled checks of at least **nine SES providers** going to low-income apartments, run-down storefronts, P.O. boxes and other various locations where the SES vendor businesses do not exist. These cancelled checks range from \$6,000 to over \$100,000. (A video documenting cancelled checks and the addresses to which they were sent are also enclosed in the attached notebook.)

As stated to Board President Perkins, on behalf of all taxpayers and as one in the media, who has a responsibility to inform the public, I share this information with you as our newly elected Auditor of State so that you may act quickly to ensure a thorough investigation minus conflict of interest is conducted. I also share this information with you because district officials do not appear to be capable of investigating their own.

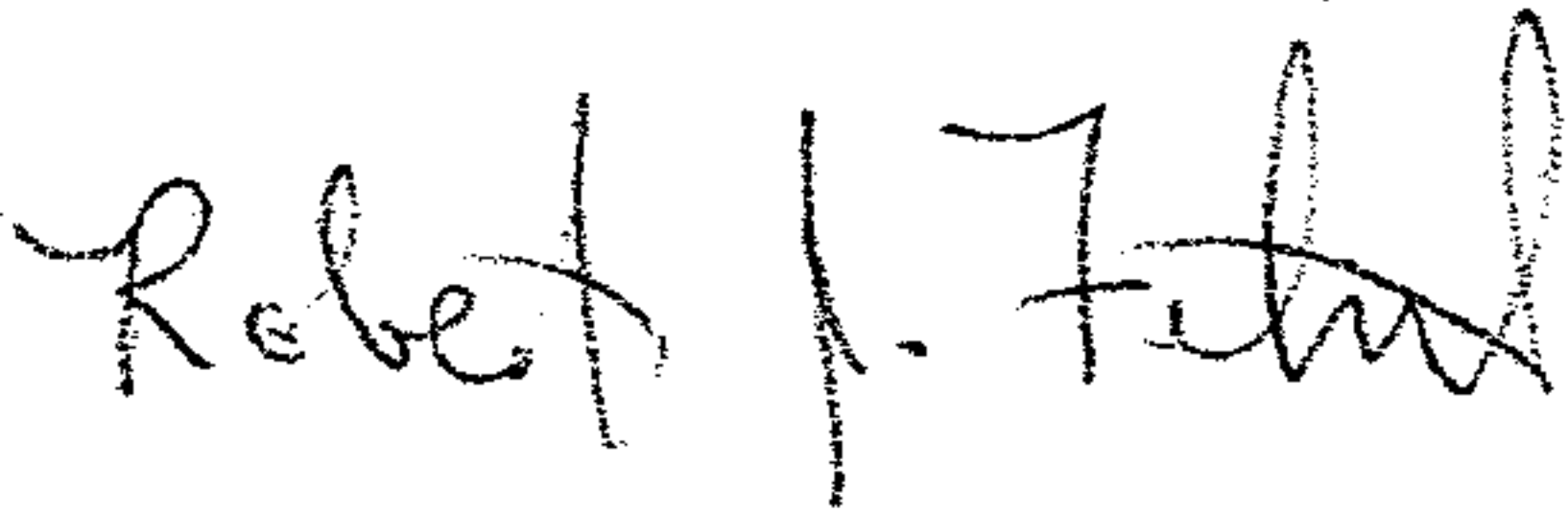
Since these SES provider business do not appear to exist, getting this information in the hands of our state auditor was important to ensure that any persons involved do not have the opportunity to falsify, conceal, alter, destroy, deface or mutilate records for the purpose of hindering any local, state, or federal investigation into these alleged SES vendors.

As is made clear in your press release dated January 18, 2011, you are investigating possible theft in the City of Grove City and the Auditor of State's Special Audit Section investigates suspicious of fraud and works with financial auditors and law enforcement to identify if public funds have been misused.

The summary and documents I have also enclosed in a notebook strongly support public funds have and are being misused and further supports some type of collusion between district officials and these alleged SES providers.

I look forward to receiving my assigned number upon the Auditor of State's receipt of this reporting of allegations of fraud supported by the enclosed documents. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert J. Fitrakis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "R".

Dr. Robert J. Fitrakis

Editor and Publisher of The Free Press

General Counsel

614-374-2380

Enclosures: Outlined Summary of Documents and Notebook of Documents in Support of Letters and & Summary