

**Thursday, April 22, 2010****Investigating the claims for a 'forensic audit' of state finances**

I love the determined, sniff 'em out and lock 'em up sound of a "forensic audit" of state government, don't you?

It was the bumper-sticker demand of defeated Republican gubernatorial primary candidate Adam Andrzejewski.

And now there are GOP-backed **measures** in the Illinois House and Senate calling for "a forensic audit of all state spending, hiring, procurement, and contracts awarded and the appointment of board and commission officials and decisions made by boards and commissions or those with procurement or hiring authority during the Blagojevich administration."

The Better Government Association is on board with the idea as is Democratic budget hawk Rep. Jack D. Franks of Marengo, whose approving essay ([Want to solve the budget crisis? Say no to spending.](#)) appeared in the Tribune Thursday.

The word "forensic" makes you think of precision crime fighting — "Relating to the use of science or technology in the investigation and establishment of facts or evidence in a court of law," says the American Heritage Dictionary. Fans of legal procedurals know that forensic accountants are those who specialize in investigating suspect economic transactions and uncovering fraud.

A statewide forensic audit would "identify waste, fraud, abuse and corruption," as well as duplication of services, according to Andrzejewski, who heads up [For the Good of Illinois](#), an anti-tax advocacy group.

Cool.

I wanted to know more about this notion, so I called the National Governors Association, which tracks states' strategies for attacking difficult budget problems.

Officials there hadn't heard of it and directed me to the National Association of State Budget Officers, which passed me off to the [National Association of State Auditors, Comptrollers and Treasurers](#) where an associate director told me forensic audit was not a term of art in the field.

When I reached [the Council of State Governments](#) in Lexington, Ky., executive director David Adkins told me, "I'd never heard the term until your phone call today."

Adkins is important because he was a Republican state legislator in Kansas from 1993 until 2005, and those who are now calling for a forensic audit of Illinois government frequently claim that a forensic audit in the Jayhawk State in 2003 saved taxpayers \$1 billion.

It's true, said Adkins, that then-Democratic Gov. Kathleen Sebelius instituted an aggressive review of state spending practices early in her first term. "But most of the savings came from picking low-hanging fruit," he said, such as selling off state vehicles.

"They found no fraud and nobody went to jail," said former Kansas House Speaker Melvin Neufeld, also a Republican, who was among those who dismissed Sebelius' \$1-billion-saved claim as "smoke and mirrors" when she ran for re-election in 2006. "It wasn't even a real audit," Neufeld said. "It was a bunch of kitchen-table groups" who "found things like cheaper places to buy office supplies."

[A review of Sebelius' claims](#) in the Topeka Capital-Journal in 2006 attributed \$813 million of the \$1 billion "savings" to alterations in the state's 10-year comprehensive highway plan.

Advocates also point to an aggressive budget initiative in the early 1990s by Texas Democratic Gov. Ann Richards — the Texas Performance Review — which methodically challenged the basic assumptions behind numerous line items and looked

for ways to save money and make government more efficient. It's widely credited with saving billions over the last few decades and inspiring numerous other states to launch similar efforts to test and measure program performance.

But it wasn't a "forensic audit." Certainly not the costly fishing expedition envisioned by the proposals now in Springfield.

"These resolutions would require my office to re-examine 135 million transactions and check all the details on about 50,000 contracts a year going back nine years," said Illinois Auditor General William Holland. "It would be a mind-boggling, astronomical cost. We're talking hundreds of millions of dollars."

Holland, whose office is nonpartisan, was once chief of staff to former Democratic Senate President Phil Rock. And though Holland formally takes no position on any bill, he said it's "very doubtful" that such an undertaking would pay for itself.

Still, Holland acknowledges what's no secret to any of us: State government could be — must be — run more efficiently, especially in times of fiscal crisis like these. Not every program needs to continue. Not every dollar is spent wisely (I'm looking at you, lawmakers and bureaucrats with state cars).

But as good as it sounds, the forensic audit looks more like a gimmick than a plan.

For a list of web sources on this topic, click [here](#).

<>WEB EXTRA: highlights of arguments Andrzejewski sent me via e-mail this week:

Forensic audit bullet points--

1. Audit should not be partisan. Examples: Kansas and Texas were Democratic Governors.
2. Will save taxpayers billions of dollars. University of Illinois at Chicago professor Dick Simpson has stated that 5% of all state spending is waste, fraud, and corruption. Possibility of \$2.5 billion on a \$52 billion budget.
3. Has organizational support: Illinois Policy Institute (John Tillman), Better Government Association (Andy Shaw)
4. Republicans are leading on this: (HR 1057) House Leader Tom Cross and 26 Republican co-sponsors; (SR763) Senator Kyle McCarter, Bill Brady, Leader Christine Radogno, Dan Duffy and Matt Murphy (all are chief sponsors). Republican state chairman, Pat Brady has been a strong supporter- used to work for Deloitte and Touche.
5. Locally the audit is non-partisan as all 3 candidates for Cook County Board are running on a forensic audit of Cook County Spending (the green, democrat, republican).
6. Is a tool to cut spending: fat not muscle.

MICHAEL MADIGAN: Speaker Madigan opposes the audit, saying, in effect, that spending a few million to cut a few billion, "will cost too much".

My state rep Patty Bellock (R-Hinsdale) was the lead sponsor of [HB5242 Forensic Audit-Medicaid](#) passed the IL House 113-00. HB5242 is good policy- to audit the fraud out of Medicaid. If the audit is good for Medicaid fraud (doctors, hospitals, and the poor), isn't it just as good for all the spending? Medicaid is a \$13 billion unit, the whole budget is approx. \$52 billion. Or do the politicians just want to leave their own spending /frauds out of the audit?

(Rep. Patty Bellock is lead sponsor of HR1057- Forensic audit of state spending- called it the most important legislation in the session!)

WHAT WOULD WE FIND?

Obviously, each day your "Watch Dogs" have a new front page article exposing frauds and waste in the Tribune. Some examples of problems:

1. [Chicago Dan Ryan Reconstruction Project](#)- \$375 million
2. [16 state owned aircraft: Flies at \\$3,000/hr, \\$4 million per year.- \\$10's of millions.](#)

3. **McPier Janitorial Contract \$20 million extra!**
4. **Illinois Tollway Authority Mis-accounts for \$150 million**
5. **Since 2005, security firm paid over \$1.3 million for 3rd airport at Peotone- a cornfield!**

McPier would like a taxpayer bailout. And the Tollway Authority is rumored to want a toll faire increase.

The term "forensic audit" does not have a standard definition. On her Governor's website (www.kansas.com), Kathleen Sebelius used the term "forensic audit" to describe the auditing that she was recognized by Time Magazine for having undertaken. I did not screen shoot her website, although I had a link to her site as source. Obviously, Sebelius' entire governors website was taken down and I can't get the Democrats in Kansas to unearth a screen shot of it for me from their archives. I first learned of "forensic auditing" through her website.

I have since talked to Prof. Art Hull of the University of Kansas, who was one of the leaders on the audit. I followed up with him on Monday, April 19, and when I asked about "forensic audit", he chuckled and said, "Call it what you'd like." He did re-iterate the details of the 2004 as he remembers them. He says Sebelius saved \$300 million on a \$4 billion general operating budget on "the classic little things": selling the state central motor pool, publish online the state phone book instead of print it, etc. And then \$800 million was identified from a restructuring of the state's bond portfolio. This is the \$1.1 billion of savings that Time Magazine references to stave off the tax hike while Kansas had a \$1 billion budget deficit.

The Kansas auditing experience is instructive because Kansas is a small state. Our general revenue operating budget is approx. \$25 billion depending on what's included- budget doc. attached above. Since Kansas saved \$300M on \$4B, in ratio, Illinois could conceivably save \$1.875B on \$25B (a rifle shot 7.5% of waste, corruption, graft and mis-spending vs. no cuts vs. across the board cuts). The total Kansas savings of \$1.1B on \$4B is better than 25% of the operating budget, and that would be north of \$5B in Illinois. Nobody could argue that Illinois is better managed than Kansas anyway- we are awaiting the spell binding Blagojevich trial in June.

In fact, without an audit, the current Democratic Governor Parkinson, (Art Hull thought, please source it) has cut better than 20% of the budget! Like Democratic in Springfield, Parkinson said, "there's no place to cut"- but that was a couple cuts ago. Chicago Democrats in Springfield say that there's no place to cut, but then again they really don't do any of the cutting either.

So, Gov. Sebelius called her audit a "forensic audit", and we do know that effective auditing with teeth did result in Kansas savings (taxes were not hiked in 2004) and Time recognized her rightly for the financial work.

In addition to the general operating budget (like Kansas), Illinois can ALSO get tremendous efficiencies from a forensic audit of the "federal awards" where there is a complete lack of spending controls on \$17 billion! Last summer, Holland said, "the state has a material weakness" on all federal programs. "The state of Illinois doesn't have an adequate process in place to permit the timely completion of a complete and accurate schedule of expenditures of federal awards." Material weakness is an internal control deficiency that is a significant deficiency, the magnitude of the condition noted raises the risk that material non-compliance could occur and not be detected by entity's internal controls. **Source:** (pdf)

A forensic audit is deep, evidentiary, follows the money and holds up in court. It differs from the post-audit work currently done by the Auditor General or comptroller in one word: proof. On a reactive, historical basis, we would be able to prove where the state has spent nearly a half a trillion dollars since 2002, nine budget years. On a go forward basis, a forensic audit is pro-active, and benchmarked, metrics and controls, and frameworks would be instituted to make sure future spending is proper. The resolutions arm Holland with subpoena power to make sure he has the tools for compliance.

When the cause of death can not be determined, a forensic autopsy is conducted. Illinois is financially insolvent; a forensic audit will determine the cause of our financial death. I do see a clear parallel.

If people stole or participated in fraud, bought their job, or received a contract due to illegal activity, they deserve to be punished. The forensic audit will develop the proof to prosecute these companies and people. This is not new in the Illinois private sector or in the office of Governor of Illinois!

The audit will be a revenue center not a "cost center", as no one believes it will "lose" money. However, I did sit with accountants at Big Four firms and tried to get a handle on "costs". All input was very rough and based on experience, but an estimate of \$60 million to audit the last fiscal year of spending and \$225 million to audit the last nine years of spending. At

these levels, this audit is a "pay-go" audit, as it pays for itself as it goes. The reason the first year is the most expensive is because the institutional knowledge of the audit as it progresses. All of the work doesn't need to be recreated at every year- the audit is therefore fairly scalable.

The New York Times last fall studied all state Medicaid programs and said 10% was fraud. In Illinois, the forensic audit of Medicaid alone would save \$1.3 billion! Therefore, there is no possible way to lose money. Your paper has published Medicaid fraud investigation on the front page within the last week.

As I said in the Blue Room, Capital press conference on March 24, 2010, let's let the Auditor determine priority and then ask for resources. Priority should be given to the last four years of spending, because it is most relevant. The audit should be wrapped up in one year.

Comptroller Dan Hynes and the Public accountability project (PAP) is another public relations project that IL taxpayers have to fund with no-teeth, and no hope for reversing the systemic corruption and patronage spending problems confronted by Illinois.

Let's examine the goals from their homepage of website:

1. Bringing about awareness of state government programs; and increasing public accessibility to information about state government programs and services. The second and fourth goals are strikingly similar, so let's take them together. (The Auditor Holland says that, "state doesn't have a comprehensive, consistent inventory of state programs." Source: Resolution audit #130, Oct. 2007.) If we can't quantify the gross number of state programs, why is Hynes "bringing awareness" to them and accessibility to... what.

2. Hynes first and third goals are virtually the same, so I'll group these also: Making state government more results-oriented and Facilitating informed decision-making on the allocation of state resources.

First of all the Comptroller doesn't even have access to the agency financial information on a timely basis! From Holland's Statewide Audit, August, 2009: ""The state of Illinois' current financial reporting process does not allow the state to prepare a complete and accurate CAFR or the schedule of expenditures of federal awards in a timely manner. The state hasn't been able to solve or make substantive changes to the system to effectively remediate these financial reporting weaknesses. The process is heavily dependent on the post audit being a part of internal control. We continue to inform that post audit is not/should not be an internal control." Statewide Audit, August, 2009 Source: <http://www.auditor.illinois.gov/Audit-Reports/Performance-Special-Multi/Statewide-Single-Audit/FY08-Single-digest.PDF>

Secondly, the results of huge agencies like DCEO are horrible! DCEO's mission is to grow jobs and we rank 48th last year and for 20 years in job growth. And last year we put \$1.3 billion into DCEO for this general purpose. DCEO is not an outlier, as Illinois under-performs most states on every benchmark.

So, PAP is just another layer in the shell game of money, power and politics that is the Illinois budget.

If Hynes was really serious about reform, controls and efficient spending, he would have addressed his own primary function in reporting years ago. The comptroller issues the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). The CAFR is published a year and a week after the close of the previous fiscal year- every year. That's an outrage.

A forensic audit is deep, evidentiary, follows the money and holds up in court. It differs from the post-audit work currently done by the Auditor General or comptroller in one word: proof. On a reactive, historical basis, we would be able to prove where the state has spent nearly a half a trillion dollars since 2002, nine budget years. On a go forward basis, a forensic audit is pro-active, and benchmarked, metrics and controls, and frameworks would be instituted to make sure future spending is proper.

Although Kansas and Texas are very good examples of auditing work to streamline government services and save taxpayers money and the Kansas governor called her audit a "forensic audit", the forensic audit I advocate would be more along the lines of the forensic audit of the City of New Orleans.

FORENSIC AUDIT OF CITY OF NEW ORLEANS: A forensic audit in the city of New Orleans discovered 140 off-the-books agencies, never subject to a public audit. **Source:** (*Zorn note, the story does not refer to a "forensic audit"*)

From the article: **But the current inspector general, Leonard Odom—who worked as the inspector general for the Chicago Housing Authority from 1996-2002—has not been deterred. On a wall in his office is a sprawling work-in-progress: an attempt to diagram, with scores of yellow Post-it notes, every arcane, off-the-books board, commission and agency in New Orleans' tangled city bureaucracy. So far, investigators have found more than 140 agencies that are not included in any city audit. "Here's one: something called the Delgado-Albania Plantation Commission," Odom said, pointing at a random sticky note. "They get about \$37,000 a year, but we don't know what they do. But we're going to find out."**


Now, if this is the experience of just one corrupt city in Louisiana, can there be any question for a forensic audit of Illinois state

spending. The forensic audit saves taxpayers money, goes a long way toward ending public corruption and helps to balance the budget while creating efficiencies in streamlined services. Money needs to start following people in need and not business as usual.

On a separate note, Gov. Quinn issued an executive order to establish a "Sunshine Commission" and then never appointed the board!

The pols in charge don't have the will to clean Illinois up.

Comments

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People need to go to "open the books" and sign the petition. They also need to call Mike Madigan's office and tell him to allow the bill to go forward.

I am willing to bet there is much more than a few million dollars in fraud. What one clearly does see is that it is definitely illegal if money does not go towards one's health, life, etc. and criminal activity and violations of around 83 Illinois Compiled Statutes is involved. Mental health used as a false front. There has been claims where one psychiatrist in the state of Florida charged Medicaid for at least \$5 b. That children have died from the overdosing of dangerous cocktail of psychiatric drugs. "Off Label" Drugging for illegal purposes. Exploitation of victims/targets/witnesses/"Victims of Violent Crime" and the illegal demand they tell a fictitious story while they illegally defraud records and deny Constitutional and Civil Rights and right to "Due Process". The incompetent, delusional, and psychotic doctors/psychiatrists and so-called Guardianship Lawyers hired by the state. Illegally charging or stating they gave certain services when they were never done. They never had any authority over the case and laws are written to be obeyed.

Posted by: Carolyn Meece | [Friday, April 23, 2010 at 06:06 AM](#)

---Zorn is an "always negative" Modern Liberal drone of the Obama administration who acts like a spoiled 11 year old boy. We all know on the face of it, that no matter what you call the audit, it will ferret out the corruption that is Illinois politics: the Chicago Way! You could say, "Open the books" ten different ways, and it wouldn't matter to Zorn, he'd call it a gimmick. Someone should audit his head! Listen, close down government waste in Illinois, or "Just Vote Them Out!" How broke do we have to be before somebody/anybody gets us some results?

Posted by: G. Arthur Vadero | [Friday, April 23, 2010 at 07:51 AM](#)

A "Forensic Audit" is a well known (but somewhat recent) term in accounting. It usually refers to auditing after an allegation of embezzlement or fraud.

Posted by: Bo in Peoria | [Friday, April 23, 2010 at 08:11 AM](#)

Eric,

I would simply settle for an audited of the state, city, county and federal budgets. Corporate America is held to task to keep their numbers clean, and they sometimes have problems doing it, so how bad do you think a governmental budget is where there is no independent oversight?

The most skilled at cooking books are those we elect. We should not have to wonder what the "real" deficit is or what the true cost of a program is. It should be much more objective.

No more of the phony "off budget" gimmick. Legislatures get away with many of their games because nobody knows for sure what the true state of the budget is. Seems like a pretty easy fix to me.

Posted by: FedUpInChiTown | [Friday, April 23, 2010 at 08:14 AM](#)

Ronald Reagan's first term featured a "blue ribbon" panel of 256 business "experts" who spent 2 years looking at government waste. They concluded that the federal government was wasting 300 billion per year then. Imagine what it is now, not to mention Illinois. Do we really need an audit to determine that Illinois cannot in it's present financial shape afford 16 state owned aircraft? Give me a break. Duh!!!

Posted by: Jim Chambliss | [Friday, April 23, 2010 at 08:18 AM](#)

Well if Eric Zorn says it's silly and Mike Madigan opposes it then it really must have some value.

ZORN REPLY -- And if conservative Republicans in Kansas, where the idea supposedly worked, say it was just "smoke and mirrors" that accomplished little, advocates for the idea here in Illinois will put their hands over their ears and say "na na na na Madigan"

Posted by: KENoble | [Friday, April 23, 2010 at 08:28 AM](#)

1. You made the mistake of mostly contacting persons associated with state government, who, of course, are lukewarm to really doing a forensic audit. Maybe you should have looked to people in the Justice Department or SEC who cracked the Enron or Goldman Sachs cases.
2. As far as Holland not really wanting to get into it, he did a wide ranging audit of the RTA system in 2007, and while he had suggestions, the legislature diluted them into nothingness. As long as the General Assembly is composed as it is, don't expect Holland to say anything different than what he told you.
3. As shown by Quinn's posting of the proposed FY 2010-2011 budget on the Internet, as a supposed token to "transparency," the state doesn't use anything close to accepted accounting methods. That budget basically had all sorts of special accounts that said "cash in cash out, cash balance remaining" without saying the source of any of the cash. My condo association has a more comprehensible budget than this.
4. One can assume, as do the Republicans, that with 10 years of crooked governors from both parties, working people like Levine and Cellini, as well as General Assembly members only championing their self interests, there is plenty of wasteful spending in Illinois, far more than in Kansas or Texas.

So, maybe a forensic audit will not save the \$13 billion in the 2009-2010 budget that Quinn can't spend because Hynes won't sign rubber checks, but you seemed real eager to consult only those who didn't know what one was or would say it wouldn't work.

ZORN REPLY -- Actually, no. I was in a lot of contact with Andrzejewski, as you can see by reading the web extra above and I spoke with Andy Shaw at the BGA. The calls to these national organizations and calls to Kansas officials (which overlapped) were part of a serious effort to find out just what a "forensic audit" is -- Adam's definition and the definition in the bill is very once-over -- and how it worked in the one place advocates keep citing as a place where it worked. Most of the people I interviewed were Republicans.

Posted by: jack (the real one) | [Friday, April 23, 2010 at 08:38 AM](#)

Illinois has an auditor general and he issues an annual report.

I'd be warmer to the idea of a new audit of the State of Illinois if the people leading the charge read the auditor general's report and had specific areas where they think the report is incomplete or otherwise flawed.

Posted by: [Carl Nyberg](#) | [Friday, April 23, 2010 at 09:26 AM](#)

---A thorough audit would be a good thing. Even Madigan may not know how many hidden "Commissions" and Boards, with nothing to do, exist in state government. Unfortunately, Illinois is too far gone. We have elected all the least honorable people, for far too long, to expect them to do anything to clean this state. Political office-holding has become nothing more than a way to enrich oneself without ever having to perform gainful employment. Why else would it be so difficult to enact any effective ethics and anti-corruption legislation?

Posted by: nak | [Friday, April 23, 2010 at 09:27 AM](#)

I wasn't talking about their party affiliation. I was talking about their affiliation with state governments. As I implied, Ryan had crooked dealmakers and profligate spending, notwithstanding that he was a Republican; Dem. Blago just took that to a new level.

Obviously, other than Andrzejewski, most of the other people with which you talked did not even know what the term meant. As I mentioned, and Bo seems to point out, it doesn't seem like you contacted an accountant's association, or the Justice Department.*

I consider your calls to officials of other state governments similar to the Tribune printing a piece by Demetrius Giannoulis lauding the virtues of community banks, which, unbelievably it also did today. The comments on that board, other than those possibly posted by Chinese scammers,** speak for themselves.

Let us know when you contact one of the sources I suggested.

*I retract my suggestion about the SEC, in light of the article in the Sun-Times that 31 of its staffers spent government time looking at porn.

**Firefox says to substitute "spammers," but both terms apply.

Posted by: jack (the real one) | [Friday, April 23, 2010 at 10:30 AM](#)

BOTH parties in Illinois are hopelessly corrupt. Governors of BOTH parties have spent time in prison. I really imagined Blago was different. I was wrong. Still not sure how I feel about Quinn, but I know I find his opponent's views abhorrent. For all those bashing Democrats, it was Bush who left our country's economy in shambles and our military overextended and stressed to the breaking point. As usual, the American people vote for a Democrat to clean up the mess the Republican made.

Posted by: Patrick | [Friday, April 23, 2010 at 10:38 AM](#)

Patrick: Do you really think that Quinn and Alexi's disciples running for State Treasurer and State Comptroller are going to clean up anything that Dems. Blago, Cullerton, Madigan, and Jones left us? Get real.

Posted by: jack (the real one) | [Friday, April 23, 2010 at 10:50 AM](#)

Eric--This sort of thing is exactly why I admire you so much. I wouldn't have thought to question the very premise of "a forensic audit," much less thoroughly debunk it the way you did. The hysterical, ad-hominem non-responses on this board by conservatives are instructive, as they usually are.

Posted by: Pan | [Friday, April 23, 2010 at 10:57 AM](#)

The state already does audits. And this state, like all governments, wastes money. We don't need to spend \$60 million or whatever to tell us that.

Adam Andrzejewski got 14% in the primary. He should go back to selling phone books.

Posted by: Reality Check | [Friday, April 23, 2010 at 11:03 AM](#)

More of the usual from Zorn. I mean, accountability of spending in one of the most corrupt states in the union? Nah, don't bother... it's too expensive.

Yeah, we should simply continue on this brilliant path of doom...

Michigan here we come.

Posted by: JDH | [Friday, April 23, 2010 at 11:11 AM](#)

Watching Rod Blagojevich type on a keyboard and try to use a cell phone ought to tell Eric Zorn about the natural tendencies of the public sector. He can call around to every non-governmental organization that focuses on the government for a source to confirm the details of a "forensic audit", but the term is clearly tongue and cheek phraseology tying together words that taxpayers understand independently to spark a political push that either stands to benefit or damage every taxpayer.

I like the idea of an audit. I think the true smoke blowers are the William Holland's that do in fact put their fingers in their ears and ignore the fact that the Internet is a tool that diversifies resources. You might even think that Zorn would see the progressiveness in empowering taxpayers to volunteer their time to examine the books.

In the end, I do not know how much a forensic audit would save, but I do think it can be combined with other measures such as pension reform and new or increased taxation on services to build majority support.

If that's out of the question, taxpayers certainly can volunteer their time to make life a living hell for elected officials for doing nothing.

Posted by: wtfci | [Friday, April 23, 2010 at 11:34 AM](#)

Forensic auditing has been around a LONG time. Fortunately, the average person hasn't committed a crime to require one. Those in government who claim to not know what one is are lying! But what else is new?

I'd like to bring to everyone's attention the printing operation in Springfield (I know an employee at that department) that works all week printing up various items that are available on the State website. PLUS, gets overtime every weekend for incinerating (BURNING) said printed items.

We need that department (et al) like we need a hole in our heads! Perhaps we should do an OCCUPATION audit first-by an objective agency, NOT appointed by the government!

Like I always said, state job=welfare with a title!

ZORN REPLY -- I don't deny that corruption exists and it costs us, but I don't believe that it's even close to what has put us in this \$13 billion ditch. Most of the government spending is not criminal in the legal sense (or even the moral sense) a wasteful, foolish program that isn't needed and accomplishes little but was approved by the GA is NOT a crime and you don't need a forensic auditor to tell you that. Indeed, a forensic auditor would simply say, and I'm making up the particulars, "Yep, \$1 million for teaching first graders the state song was allocated and distributed just as budgeted." A forensic auditor isn't tasked with or positioned to say, "Hey, wait a sec, why are we spending \$1 million on teaching first graders the state song?" That is a political/legislative/public policy question. And those are the questions we need to ask.

Posted by: J9 PCG | [Friday, April 23, 2010 at 11:51 AM](#)

Hey Zorn! I agree that calling this a "forensic" audit is a bit over the top, but you're arguing over words.

What's your suggestion? A state income tax increase????

Posted by: John | [Friday, April 23, 2010 at 12:08 PM](#)

Please remember we have a state inspector general's office. The office seems to have a fairly well-credentialed staff that I am sure did not come cheap.

Can anyone tell us exactly what they do? I couldn't tell from their website. Seems to be with all those ex-prosecutors and investigators over there, they ought to have a permanent forensic audit going, and they ought not to sit back and wait for whistleblowers to call.

Perhaps they're doing great stuff and just not telling us.

Posted by: GJO'L | [Friday, April 23, 2010 at 12:35 PM](#)

EZ,

More than a Forensic Audit of our state government, how about an accountability enema as well?

Posted by: Perry F. | [Friday, April 23, 2010 at 12:39 PM](#)

Your idea of a forensic audit is laughable.

Just today, there is an article about how the DCCA awarded \$1.5 million to a grocer to open a store in Maywood. Plus this grocer got \$1.2 million in loans...all this from memory which may be faulty.

I know for a fact, based on actual experience, with numerous grocery stores in similar locations, that it doesn't cost \$2.7 million to remodel an existing building, a building that had already served as a grocery store in the past. No forensic audit would find

something like that. Just as example after example of other grants and taxpayer funds were directed to questionable programs. The daycare center that moved from the burned out southside church to space that didn't meet code requirements downtown comes to mind. How about that "arts center" that ate \$6 million on 47th Street and managed to get a fence erected around an empty lot? \

No forensic audit will find that Stroger has hired a busboy, and his cousin, to fill high dollar posts.

Not totally useless, but not particularly useful either. Probably not the panacea everyone wishes it was.

Posted by: Campfire Joe | [Friday, April 23, 2010 at 01:17 PM](#)

This State is in great shape - lots of jobs, no corruption and a balanced budget. It's a veritable Democratic Utopia!

What could an audit really uncover?

Just as the union bused lackies yelled in Springfield, 'raise my taxes, raise my taxes'

They (Dummyrats) always seem to find enough money to keep the straight party leeches in check until the next election.

Posted by: [b](#) | [Friday, April 23, 2010 at 01:49 PM](#)

I just read the article about the grocery store. Yes, this building used to be a grocery store but that was 15 years ago. The new store agreed to a gut rehab. I can't imagine that there would be anything in the old store that was left, much less usable. Probably has to be rewired, new water supplies & all. Not to mention that the grocery business has changed in the last few years (witness my local Jewel's second remodeling in the last 5 years to keep up with new trends.) The main thing about the building is that it is the right size & probably has areas that are more easily redone into, say, dairy, produce, meat sections.

You are right about the audit, though. Those are meant to find corruption, but mis-spending is an entirely different thing. Zero based budgeting is probably the best way to go, but that takes time.

Posted by: [Liz](#) | [Friday, April 23, 2010 at 03:42 PM](#)

Actually there are some people on this website that do have knowledge of mega fraud, High Extortion, incompetent state workers, etc. When insurance companies are ripped off for mega fraud, etc. to the tune of \$50,000 or more for one person who has been illegally exploited. "CRY_WOLF", premeditated crimes, perjury, Malice, Racketeering, etc. is involved. When you multiply it by a number of people for the mega bucks that go down rat holes. One can usually see that those who are into slander and libel do not even have a leg to stand on.

Matrix - take the pill and see how far down the rabbit hole it really takes you in reality. The abusers and corrupt reality means absolutely nothing. I have my own reality and I am rarely wrong. "Racketeering" is illegally demanding to insert "False Memory". To assume makes an a** out of you and me.

"Satan's School For Girls", who don't the controlling abusers go out and buy a rat!!
"Brainwashing, From Pavlov to Power"
When people forget history. It has a habit of repeating itself. "Joseph Stalin, Red Terror"

Posted by: [Carolyn Meece](#) | [Friday, April 23, 2010 at 05:01 PM](#)

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