



LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR
DARYL G. PURPERA, CPA, CFE

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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONS, OFFICE OF STATE POLICE

State Police began collecting a \$26 fee for background checks requested through sheriff offices for non-licensed health care workers and licensed ambulance personnel on July 1, 2013. However, state law required the agency collect the fee starting in 1993, according to a report released Monday by Legislative Auditor Daryl Purpera.

In response to the report, State Police officials said that the “interpretation of the statute from 1993 through 2013” was in question. State Police believed that the fee should be charged only when the bureau performed the background checks. Background checks can be requested in two ways, according to the report: via the Internet directly from State Police or through a sheriff’s office that can access the State Police database.

The informational report to the Legislature, assembled by Purpera’s Financial Audit Services section based on documents provided by State Police, said that in the 15-month period from April 2012 to June 2013, the agency conducted 123,549 background checks that were not billed the \$26 fee, “resulting in lost revenues of \$3,212,274.”

The report said for the half of the 2013-14 fiscal year that State Police collected the fee – from July 1, 2013 through Dec. 31, 2013 – its Bureau of Criminal Identification and Information billed \$1,054,664 for 40,564 background checks conducted through sheriff offices.

The report from the state auditor did not recap how much the state may have lost on unbilled background checks since they were made mandatory by the Legislature in 1993 through April 2012. “We did not obtain data on the number of background checks conducted prior to April 2012 because OSP bureau personnel told us that retrieval of that data from archives would be labor intensive for the department,” auditors said.

The fee State Police was supposed to charge when the law went into effect in 1993 was \$10. Lawmakers increased the fee to \$26 in 2002.

Parties who use the Internet must remit the \$26 fee at the time of the request with a credit or debit card.

Prior to July 1, 2013, the OSP bureau did not charge the authorized agents the \$26 fee when the requests were submitted through a sheriff’s office, the report said.



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The state auditor recommended that State Police should now seek a legal opinion as to whether it can now collect the uncollected fees.

The report said the Office of State Police does not have “written procedures for the billing and collection of these background check fees” and recommended a process be established. “The absence of formal written policies increases the risk that proper procedures will not be communicated to those employees responsible for collecting department revenues, especially during times of employee turnover due to retirements, promotions, resignations, etc.”

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On Twitter: Auditors discover State Police did not collect background check fees as required by law.