

WASHINGTON – Today, Congressman Mike Quigley (D-IL) requested that the U.S. [Government Accountability Office](#)

(GAO) investigate whether and to what extent Cook County misspent federal tax dollars to pay contractors in the period following the electoral defeat of County Board President Todd Stroger.

“A ‘friends-and-family’ plan may help you save a few bucks on your cell phone bill, but it’s costing the taxpayers of Cook County a lot of money,” said Quigley. “I suppose we shouldn’t be surprised when someone who put himself before his constituents while *in* office acts no differently on his way

*out*

, but this is bigger than Todd Stroger. State and local governments have received significant amounts of federal assistance recently, and with that increased funding must come increased oversight and accountability. If we’re going to restore the public’s trust in government, we must ensure that our constituents’ hard-earned tax dollars are spent appropriately, efficiently, and transparently.”

Last year, [Quigley requested](#) an investigation into the effectiveness of Project Shield, a Cook County program receiving funding from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to better equip emergency responders with state-of-the-art surveillance systems. The \$43 million project – to outfit suburban police cars with cameras capable of feeding back live video to a command center in the event of terrorism or other emergency – is over-budget and behind schedule. A DHS audit of the program is currently underway.

Before being elected to represent Illinois’ 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, Quigley served on the Cook County Board of Commissioners for more than ten years. His letter to the GAO follows.

May 20, 2010

Mr. Gene L. Dodaro  
Acting Comptroller General of the United States  
U.S. Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

I am writing to request that the Government Accountability Office conduct a comprehensive examination of whether and to what extent Cook County, Illinois misspent federal funds to pay contractors in the period following the electoral defeat of Cook County Board President Todd Stroger.

Recent news reports indicate that contracts may have been awarded, without board approval, to individuals and companies that were not performing the required work. Specifically, it has been reported that the office of the Cook County Board President approved and mailed a check for \$24,995, an amount just under the \$25,000 threshold that requires board approval, to a company called Bora Planning. This raises several concerns. First, the address of Bora Planning is the same as one of Board President Todd Stroger's campaign funds, which was closed last summer. The president of Bora Planning was also President Stroger's former campaign chairman and treasurer. Lastly, unlike other county contracts, Bora Planning was paid in full in two days, even though the work was not completed.

Recent reports indicate that this potential mismanagement of funds is not an isolated incident. The individual who approved the questionable Bora Planning contract is now under investigation by the Cook County Inspector General, and it was reported that the individual steered another contract to a business she owns. Additionally, reports have surfaced purportedly detailing two top aides to Cook County Board President Todd Stroger sidestepping the commissioners' approval of almost \$150,000 in census outreach work – dollars that were given to people they knew.

In light of continued reports of contract mismanagement by Cook County, I am deeply concerned that the county is misspending funds it receives from the federal government. State and local governments received significant amounts of federal funds through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and with that increased funding must come increased oversight. Cook County has received almost \$774 million through direct payments, grants, and cooperative agreements from the federal government between 2000 and 2010, according to USAspending.gov. If these allegations of contract mismanagement are found to be true, federal funds could be in danger of being misspent. In order to ensure federal funds are being spent effectively and efficiently, I would like to request an examination of whether, and to what extent, Cook County misspent federal funds in its payments to contractors.

Thank you very much for your attention to this important matter. Please keep my office informed of your progress.

Sincerely,

Mike Quigley  
Congressman, IL-05