

Brenda Gold's Firing From the Illinois Department of Transportation

Ms. Brenda Gold approached Representative Monique Davis regarding her firing and mistreatment at the hands of the Blagojevich Administration. Ms. Gold worked for the State of Illinois from 1980 until 2007 when she was terminated from her position as the manager of the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Civil Rights Chicago office. This came after she received nothing less than excellent performance reviews and only months before her state benefits would have vested.

Ms. Gold's first negative interaction came when she worked at the Equal Employment Office (EEO) in Schaumburg, IL as a TM 6 (technical manager), monitoring minority contracts and employment at IDOT sites. While there, Gilbert Villegas, was also put into this office as a TM 4. While there, Villegas was part of an incident where other employees heard Villegas and other associates using racial charged expletives including the N word. This incident was brought to Ms. Gold's attention who then reported it to the Civil Rights Office of IDOT. This was further investigated and Ms. Gold stated that Gilbert Villegas was told by a superior that if Villegas lied about the incident (so as to cover it up) he would get Ms. Gold's position at EEO. Shortly after the incident and investigation, Ms. Gold was transferred to the Civil Rights Office and Gilbert Villegas was placed into her old job as a TM6. Ms. Gold further claimed that upon Villegas' taking over of this position, minority contracts for African-Americans fell swiftly and specifically that 14 African-American businesses went out of business.

While in her new position at Civil Rights, a second incident involving Villegas came to her attention. Questions were raised about the Rutan interviewing process that Villegas was conducting at the EEO which consisted of giving Caucasians and African-Americans inconsistent ratings all while giving Hispanics much higher and favorable ratings. Furthermore one woman came forward and stated that Villegas gave her both the questions and answers to questions so to advantage her within the process. When Ms. Gold reported these inconsistencies, the interviews had to be thrown out and conducted again. Villegas threatened Ms. Gold after this stating that if he became a Deputy Director within IDOT, he would terminate her. Shortly after this Villegas was promoted to a position as a Deputy Director within IDOT and fired Gold from her position as manager of Civil Rights in the Chicago office. This occurred without informing Gold's direct supervisors or taking the proper channels. Villegas claimed that her position no longer had any work to be done. Both the District Engineer and IDOT Secretary Milton Sees stepped forward in her defense saying that they would take her into their Departments but were told by Villegas that she must have pissed someone off in the Governor's office. Ms. Gold reiterates that she knows NOBODY in the Governor's Administration and worked her way up to her position over a period of 27 years and through interviewing for every position that she held.

Ms. Gold stated that this firing occurred because Villegas went to Victor Roberson who worked for the Governor's Chief of Staff, John Harris and through that channel, Villegas was told to fire Ms. Gold. Ms. Gold further stated that a personal contact of Roberson was quickly put into her position at Civil Rights, the same position that she was told no longer had work.

Upon her termination, Ms. Gold filed an inside suit with Civil Rights who she claimed was supposed to investigate the matter and get back to Ms. Gold within 90 days. This occurred in July 2007 and to date she has heard nothing regarding her suit and upon any inquiry she makes the response is simply that they have not gotten to the matter. Ms. Gold was within months of retiring and having her employment benefits vest when all of this occurred and had nothing less than excellent performance reviews while serving the State of Illinois for nearly 30 years.

Representative Monique Davis