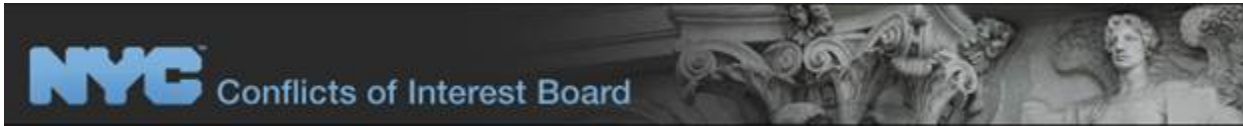


## Roy Koshy

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**From:** Michele Weinstat  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 11, 2017 10:10 AM  
**To:** Michele Weinstat  
**Subject:** COIB Fine Announced  
**Attachments:** COIB Order (HRA).pdf



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 11, 2017**

**CONTACT:** Michele Weinstat at [weinstat@coib.nyc.gov](mailto:weinstat@coib.nyc.gov) or (212) 437-0740

**After a full trial, the New York City Conflicts of Interest Board fines a former Job Opportunity Specialist for the New York City Human Resources Administration (“HRA”) \$10,000, plus restitution of \$845, for stealing from an HRA client.**

As a part of its Cash Assistance programs, HRA offers emergency “one shot” grants to eligible applicants when an unforeseen circumstance prevents them from meeting an expense. An HRA client applied for such a grant to help her avoid eviction. In order to qualify for the “one shot” grant, the client was required to submit to HRA part of her overdue rent payment, which she did, in the form of an \$845.80 money order she gave to the HRA Job Opportunity Specialist assigned to her case. Instead of disposing of the money order properly, the Job Opportunity Specialist wrote his own name in the payee field of the money order, cashed it, and kept the money for himself. Because this money never reached her landlord, the client had to obtain a second money order to stave off eviction.

After a full trial, an Administrative Law Judge (“ALJ”) at the New York City Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings issued a Report and Recommendation, finding that the former Job Opportunity Specialist misused his City position to steal the HRA client’s rent money. The ALJ’s Report recommended a \$6,000 fine, plus restitution of \$845.80 to the victim. The Board adopted the ALJ’s findings of fact but determined that a \$10,000 fine plus restitution is the appropriate penalty in this case.

In determining the penalty, the Board considered the following:

- prior penalties in cases of theft from vulnerable City clients;
- that the Job Opportunity Specialist has still not reimbursed the client for the theft; and
- that he did not accept responsibility for his actions by agreeing to settle the case before a full trial on the merits.

The Board took particular note of the Job Opportunity Specialist’s “exploitation of his HRA client’s vulnerability, and the underlying breach not only of the trust placed in him by the public, but also of his client’s trust.”

Jeffrey Tremblay, Deputy Director of Enforcement, handled this case for the Board. The Board’s Order is attached as “COIB Order (HRA).”

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*COIB is the independent, non-mayoral City agency charged with interpreting, administering, and enforcing the City's Conflicts of Interest Law, Annual Disclosure Law, and Lobbyist Gift Law. The agency's jurisdiction extends to all City agencies and current and former officers, elected officials, and employees of the City, as well as lobbyists. Learn more about COIB and the law at [nyc.gov/ethics](http://nyc.gov/ethics).*

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