



State of Tennessee

Justin P. Wilson, State Comptroller

September 9, 2014

Former Tennessee Prison for Women Employee Steals \$216,845

A special investigation by the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury has determined that Mary Williams, a former Tennessee Prison for Women trust fund custodian, took at least \$216,845 from inmate trust fund accounts during a 33 month period. The scheme was first exposed by the Law Enforcement Unit of the Tennessee Department of Correction's Investigation and Compliance Unit. The investigation was performed in conjunction with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation.

Investigators discovered that Ms. Williams created fraudulent deposits into selected inmates' accounts to make it appear as if those accounts had available funds. Ms. Williams then issued checks from those accounts, and used the money for her personal benefit. This was done without the authority or knowledge of the inmates or prison officials.

On September 5th, Williams was indicted by the Davidson County Grand Jury on one count each of theft over \$60,000, forgery, computer fraud and official misconduct. She was arrested and booked into the Davidson County Jail on September 8th.

Investigators recommend that prison officials separate financial duties in the office. No single employee should have the authority to record deposits, direct withdrawals, and have access to completed checks. Allowing one employee to have complete control over a transaction increases the risk of fraud.

"Time and again we are finding that one individual has complete control over accounting functions," Comptroller Justin P. Wilson said. "Our office is committed to protecting taxpayer money, and it's important that adequate checks and balances are put in place to eliminate fraud, waste and abuse."

To view the investigation online, go to: <http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/ia/>.

If you suspect fraud, waste or abuse of public money in Tennessee, call the Comptroller's toll-free hotline at (800) 232-4343, or file a report online at: www.comptroller.tn.gov/hotline. Follow the Comptroller's Office on twitter: [@TNCOT](https://twitter.com/TNCOT)

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