



Justin P. Wilson, Comptroller

November 17, 2016

Coffee County Teacher Stole \$29,000 From Association

A special investigation by the Tennessee Comptroller's Office in conjunction with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation has found that Stephanie Cunningham, a teacher for Coffee County Schools and former treasurer of the Coffee County Education Association, stole at least \$29,096.

Cunningham used the association's debit card and cash for her personal benefit from May 2013 through November 2015. Cunningham admitted to Comptroller investigators that she used association money to pay for personal items.

Investigators determined that Cunningham charged meals at restaurants, jewelry, cosmetics, clothing and gift cards on the association's debit card. She also made unauthorized cash withdrawals by check and ATM, and made unauthorized transfers from the association's bank account to her personal bank account.

Investigators noted that, beginning in July 2013, Cunningham began depositing personal funds into the association's bank account. These deposits totaled \$25,069.

In November 2016, Stephanie Cunningham was indicted by the Coffee County Grand Jury on one count of theft over \$10,000.

"One of the best ways to stop theft is to create a system that allows for prompt detection," said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. "One person should never be allowed to have complete control of a group's checkbook, bank account, and debit card without regular oversight. Reviewing bank statements and requiring multiple signatures on checks is a good place to start."

To view the special 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) 232-5454, or file a report online at: www.comptroller.tn.gov/hotline. Follow us on twitter: [@TNCOT](https://twitter.com/TNCOT)

Media contact: John Dunn, Public Information Officer, (615) 401-7755 or john.dunn@cot.tn.gov