

**SOME JUDGES CAUGHT SKIPPING OUT EARLY:
FULL-TIME PAY FOR PART-TIME WORK
EXCLUSIVE BGA / FOX CHICAGO NEWS
INVESTIGATION AIRS TONIGHT**

CHICAGO - The Better Government Association and Fox Chicago News expose a taxpayer ripoff---some Cook County judges routinely close their courtrooms to go home early. Tune in tonight at 9 p.m. to Fox Chicago News for our joint investigation with Dane Placko and Larry Yellen. We've documented how some judges work part-time but get full-time pay despite a court system clogged with a backlog of cases. And we've obtained a confidential government study that suggests at least one elected official harbors his own concerns about empty courtrooms and absent judges in an overburdened system. This on-going investigation raises troubling questions about the possibilities that citizens are waiting longer than necessary for their cases to be heard and defendants may be sitting in jail longer than necessary because a judge is working half a day.

STARTING SALARY FOR COOK COUNTY JUDGES IS \$160,000 PER YEAR. Tonight you'll see what happened when we caught one judge going home early to sit in her backyard and soak up some sun. Judge Gloria Chevere told us she leaves early because she's so efficient she finishes her work and there isn't anything else for her to do at the courthouse. Judge Chevere is paid over \$173,000 a year.

BGA CALLS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT

BGA Executive Director Andy Shaw said, "Illinois taxpayers should not be paying Judge Chevere to sit in the sun! With 420 judges sitting in Cook County, maybe we simply have too many if some don't even have enough work to do to keep them busy for 8 hours a day or 40 hours a week? Chief Judge Tim Evans should consider installing time clocks for judges so they have to punch in and punch out everyday just like factory workers. Whether judges are elected or appointed, they should work a full day and be accountable. Judge Evans must come up some answers and some solutions. Taxpayers demand better oversight and organization so we are not saddled with the costs of a court system that is inefficient and wasteful."

Tonight is the first part in a series of reports that will tear back the cover and reveal decades-old truths about the Cook County Courts. If you have any tips or info on judges or the courts, write to the BGA at: info@bettergov.org.

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SEE OUR STORY AT FOX CHICAGO NEWS ONLINE TO SEE THE INVESTIGATION AFTER IT AIRS: <http://www.myfoxchicago.com/subindex/news/investigative>