



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**FROM ASSISTING CRIME VICTIMS TO BEING A VICTIM OF A CRIME
Unaccounted For Cell Phone Racks Up 17,000 Minutes In Two Months**

KINGSTON, NY (February 27, 2012).... Ulster County Comptroller Elliott Auerbach revealed that a recent claims audit of cell phone charges for a county phone assigned to the ULSTER COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT'S CRIME VICTIM'S ASSISTANCE PROGRAM uncovered a missing phone which resulted in probable theft of services when it was discovered that the usage went from little or no monthly charges to over 10,000 minutes in a single month's billing cycle resulting in a total usage charge of \$1063.00. The prior month's usage was over 7000 minutes and ran up usage charges in excess of \$780.00.

"After our review and with the assistance from both the PROBATION DEPARTMENT and INFORMATION SERVICES it was discovered that the chain of custody for this particular wireless device was broken and it looks as if the County has suffered as a result of this abuse of taxpayers' money. While I realize that the losses appear to be minimal, my office is committed to insure that every dime and dollar of taxpayers' money is being prudently spent," said Comptroller Auerbach. "I have spoken with District Attorney Holley Carnright and have turned over my findings to his office to determine if there are possible criminal charges" said Auerbach.

The Comptroller was very critical of county cell phone use and policy in a June 2009 report entitled THE COST OF CONNECTIVITY when he examined cell phone cost and found the controls ineffective and made numerous recommendations for cost containment. "It's time for the policy makers to revisit county cell phone use, reduce the hundreds of devices that are county issued, and provide a monthly allowance for those employees who use their personal cell phone for county business" Comptroller Auerbach suggested.

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