FORMER TOP MTA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OFFICIAL SETTLES NEPOTISM CASE

Asked Subordinates to Guide Son Through Hiring Process

ALBANY, NY (July 24, 2015) The New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE) today announced that it has reached a settlement agreement with a former top IT employee with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) over nepotism charges for his role in getting a job for his son.

Eustace Castellaneta was the Chief Officer of Customer Service and Security within the Technology and Information Services Division of MTA's New York City Transit Division from 2008 until his retirement at the conclusion of a MTA investigation in February of this year. Following that investigation, the matter was referred to JCOPE.

In the settlement agreement with JCOPE, Castellaneta admitted that he asked subordinates to assist his son in getting employment with the MTA by, among other things, guiding him through the process and submitting his applications for multiple positions. The son was eventually hired as a computer specialist in Castellaneta's division.

Following the MTA's own investigation, Castellaneta took early retirement and his son was discharged from his employment with the authority. As part of the settlement agreement, Castellaneta agreed to pay a $1,500 fine to the Commission for a violation of Public Officers Law §73 (14) (a), which provides that no statewide employee may participate in any decision to hire a relative for any compensated position at, for or within any state agency.

"It should be clear to anyone in a position to make hiring decisions for any state agency that it is against the law to be involved in hiring a relative," said Executive Director Letizia Tagliafierro. "You simply cannot use your state position to personally benefit yourself or a family member."

A copy of the settlement may be obtained by clicking here.