

GORDON BERGESLON  
11947 BEATRICE STREET  
CULVER CITY, CA 90230

December 24, 2003

*5 pages*

TO: MS MARTHA DIXON  
FEDERAL ELECTION COMISSDION

FR: GORDON BERGELSON

RE: LAIDLAW AND OTHERS

*MUR 5375*

IN ADDITION TO MY PENDING COMPLAINT WITH YOUR AGENCY LAIDLAW  
IS ALLEGED TO HAVE PAID OFF THE CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL TO  
PASS SUBSTANDARD DRIVERS TO OPERATE MULTIPASSAENGER SCHOOL BUSES  
IN CALIOFORNIA.

PLEASE ATTACH THE FOLLOWING TO MY FILE.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

SINCERELY

*Gordon Bergelson*  
GORDON BERGELSON

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OFFICE OF GENERAL  
COUNSEL

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## CHP Accused Of Accepting Pay-Offs - FROM LAIDLAW

### Bus Drivers May Be Passing Test With Cash

POSTED: 6:02 p.m. PST December 9, 2003  
UPDATED: 7:27 p.m. PST December 9, 2003

**LOS ANGELES** — The California Highway Patrol is under investigation following allegations of cash pay-offs to CHP officers by persons applying to drive school buses.

#### FeedRoom



Did Bus Drivers Pay-Off CHP?

NBC4 FeedRoom

The head of the CHP calls the charges "disturbing," and confirmed that a team from his agency's internal affairs division is launching an investigation that could involve thousands of school bus drivers in California.

According to NBC4's internal sources, and the CHP, investigators are looking at four offices: East Los Angeles, South Los Angeles, West Los Angeles, and the southern division headquarters located in Glendale.

But the CHP will not confirm reports that four officers in charge of bus driver applications have been placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of this investigation.

Laidlaw Buses, the nation's largest school bus company, is at the center of the controversy following allegations brought forth by bus drivers about pay-offs in exchange for the right to drive a school bus.

Bus driver applicants are required to learn the material in a CHP safety handbook and to pass a mandatory test afterwards. The probe is to find out whether some CHP officers gave drivers who did not meet the requirements licenses anyway in exchange for money.

Laidlaw on Tuesday told NBC4: "Allegations were made, but we are not at liberty to talk about them. We did as much as we could, then went to the CHP ... In any allegations of wrongdoing, we investigate and make sure they go forward."

Laidlaw employs 600 drivers in the L.A. basin alone -- 500 of them drive buses for the Los Angeles Unified School District.

NBC4 has confirmed that all CHP bus driver applications in Los Angeles for at least the past year or more will have to be reviewed and then the investigation will go statewide.

Spike Helmick, Commissioner of the California Highway Patrol calls the charges some of the most disturbing allegations he's faced in his 35 years in law enforcement, which is why he's dispatched the first part of a 30- to 35-person internal affairs team that plans to stay in L.A.

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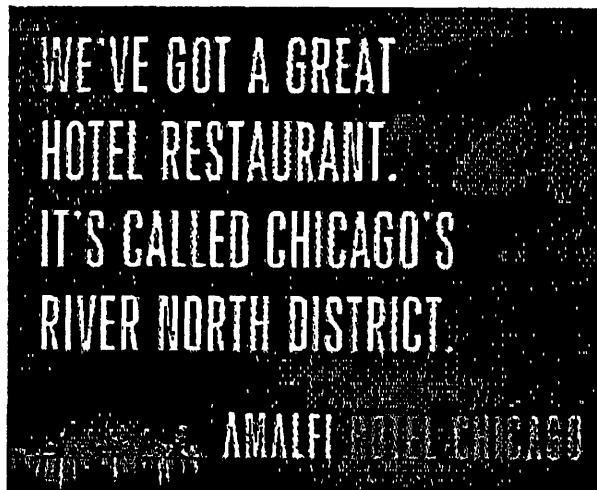
Program Listings

Watch CNBC Feedroom



until the investigation is complete.

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LA 12/10/03 F ABC News

# CHP Probes School Bus Licensing

Acting on a tip, officials are combing records to determine if officers certified unqualified L.A.-area drivers in exchange for kickbacks.

By CARL INGRAM  
and MORRIS MORIN  
Times Staff Writers

SACRAMENTO — The California Highway Patrol is investigating whether one or more officers issued licenses to unqualified school bus drivers in the Los Angeles area, officials said Tuesday.

One CHP officer and three bus drivers have been placed on leave as a result of the probe.

CHP Commissioner D.Q. "Spike" Helmick said two dozen investigators from Sacramento have been combing driver records for about a month to determine if CHP officers took kickbacks for approving school bus licenses when drivers had either failed written or practical driving tests or should have been disqualified because they had criminal records.

Investigators began reviewing licenses and records for drivers at Laidlaw Education Services after receiving a tip, Helmick said. Laidlaw provides bus service to a number of school districts, including Los Angeles Unified, but authorities wouldn't say which districts' drivers were being reviewed.

The question is, were any drivers out there not certified to drive school buses?" Helmick said. "The number may be small, but even one is too many."

The commissioner said at least one officer assigned to the CHP's South Los Angeles office had been put on administrative leave during the investigation, which started about a month ago. Although the tipster alleged that officers were taking kick-

backs, the CHP has yet to uncover evidence of such payments, Helmick said.

Investigators are examining the files of 300 to 400 drivers whose applications the officer on leave personally handled, Helmick said. He did not identify the officer.

Los Angeles Unified spokeswoman Stephanie Brady said district officials were informed of the investigation on Tuesday. A Laidlaw executive informed the district that three of the company's drivers had been placed on leave during the investigation and that one of those drivers operated a route for the L.A. district, Brady said.

Laidlaw issued a brief statement Tuesday.

"Laidlaw Education Services is cooperating with the California Highway Patrol in its investigation," said Michael D. Griffus, a senior vice president, in the written statement. "Any driver whose certification is at issue will be placed on administrative leave pending conclusion of the probe."

Helmick said three other officers had been placed on leave during the investigation, but were returned to duty when investigators found they had no apparent involvement. Helmick estimated the investigation would conclude in 10 days and said its results may be sent to the district attorney for possible criminal prosecution.

Unlike most motorists, who are licensed by the Department of Motor Vehicles, school bus drivers are licensed by the CHP so they can receive more intense testing and scrutiny.

Helmick said that while checking out the tip, investigators came upon what he described as "very sloppy work by one or two employees." That led investigators to deepen their investigation.

Times staff writer Cara Mia DiMassa contributed to this report.

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