



STATE OF ARKANSAS
**Department of Finance
and Administration**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

LITTLE ROCK – The Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration has determined that several payments made to a Little Rock-based law firm may have been made without a required authorization. Arkansas Code Annotated § 25-16-702 requires State agencies to receive the approval of both the Attorney General and the Governor before hiring outside legal counsel. At this time, the agency has not been able to confirm that the Attorney General or the Governor were informed of these payments or given the opportunity to approve or deny the use of these services.

The outside legal services in question did not involve litigation and were ministerial in nature. They were not used to either prosecute a suit brought by the State or defend against one. These services were related to a specialized field, immigration law, and involved administrative procedures such as applying for immigration petitions and visa applications on behalf of State employees. Between Fiscal Year 2007 and Fiscal Year 2014, a total of 20 payments were made to the Catlett Law Firm PLC. The total value of these payments was \$47,204.

“In our review of the available information, we failed to uncover the necessary justification for these payments,” said Richard Weiss, Director of the Department of Finance and Administration. “This is unacceptable, and the proper corrective actions are being taken.”

DFA has sought the approval of both the Governor and the Attorney General for the use of these services and has taken steps to ensure that this agency’s future use of outside legal services, if any, is properly approved in compliance with the law.

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