

WHISTLEBLOWER LAWSUITS IN WEST VIRGINIA

WEST VIRGINIA

Department of

Health & Human Resources



According to two separate lawyers for the Department of Health and Human Resources in the state of West Virginia, one of the largest agencies in the state is currently showing patterns of failure, particularly when it comes to the awarding of specific contracts that are worth millions of dollars. The two different whistleblower lawsuits were filed by Susan Perry and Jennifer Taylor. In the lawsuit, both of these women are blasting the agency, claiming that it has a terrible track record of repeated errors and mistakes. Both of these women also say that they had tried to correct these errors time and time again. The Acting Secretary for the DHHR, Rocco Fucillo, ended up putting both Perry and Taylor on leave during July as a result of their lawsuits. An assistant secretary who was responsible for the public relations aspect of the DHHR, John Law, has also been placed on leave. All three of these individuals had supposedly been reassigned from their positions after they started showing concern and asking questions about a multimillion dollar contract that was recently awarded by the DHHR to the highest bidder. It has since been three months since Perry and Taylor ended up being put on paid leave and they are now claiming that they are receiving punishment simply because they were trying to prevent the area from being wasteful. The contract that is being discussed is worth a total of \$3.5 million and was awarded to Fahlgren Mortine. The contract is expected to last for a total year and although this company was selected, there were several lower bidders that the DHHR ended up overlooking. Even so, an evaluation committee ended up looking over these bids and agreed that the contract should be given to Fahlgren. Even so, Taylor felt as though the decision was indefensible. Both Taylor and Perry had already had to correct mistakes in the past that were similar to this scenario. The Department of Health and Human Resources had already had trouble with bids before. There was once computer contract, worth \$200 million, which was re-bid two times due to several different issues and then a conflict of interest. It is believed that these bids were mishandled and both Taylor and Perry had to spend hours to fix the issue. In their lawsuits, the women also claim that they were not protected by the state law, which says that whistleblowers should be protected. They feel as though they have been casted in an entirely different light during a time when they were simply trying to protect the DHHR and the public as well.