



The City of New York  
Department of Investigation

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Release #29-2023  
nyc.gov/doi

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**FRIDAY, JULY 28, 2023**

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## **CITY PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY CARETAKER CHARGED WITH STEALING NEARLY \$6,000 IN CITY WAGES**

Jocelyn E. Strauber, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced the arrest on Thursday, July 27, of a Caretaker with the New York City Housing Authority ("NYCHA") on a charge of stealing time from the City, valued at \$5,873 in wages. DOI's investigation was prompted by NYCHA's report of potential misconduct to DOI. The Office of Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg is prosecuting the case.

STEVEN MAESTRE, 32, of the Bronx, N.Y., is charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D felony. Upon conviction, a class D felony is punishable by up to seven years in prison. He was released on his own recognizance following his arraignment Thursday evening in Manhattan Criminal Court.

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, "This City employee, as alleged, clocked in but didn't work. He not only failed to serve the NYCHA residents in the development where he was assigned, he stole money and time from the City. I thank the Manhattan District Attorney's Office for their partnership on this investigation and NYCHA for referring this matter to DOI."

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg said, "As alleged, this defendant defrauded our City when, instead of doing his job to help clean and maintain this NYCHA development, he simply went home. This conduct not only harms taxpayers, but it undermines the quality of life for public housing residents and the trust they have in city services. I thank DOI for their thorough investigation."

According to the criminal complaint, from November 13, 2022, to June 19, 2023, the defendant was employed by NYCHA as a Caretaker at Morris Houses Development in the Bronx and was scheduled to work a regular 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. shift, Monday through Friday and on alternate weekends, as well as a midnight shift from 12:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. on an as-needed basis. NYCHA caretakers are not permitted to leave the development where they are assigned while on duty, except during scheduled breaks, and are not permitted to work from remote locations.

On 19 separate occasions, the defendant was observed leaving his work location at Morris Houses, returning to his Bronx residence, and remaining at his residence during most of his scheduled shift. For example, on February 7, 2023, according to NYCHA's timekeeping records, the defendant swiped in at Morris Houses in the Bronx at 7:52 a.m. and swiped out at 4:25 p.m. DOI observed MAESTRE at his residence at 11:20 a.m. on that date; and reviewed surveillance video that showed MAESTRE entering his residence at approximately 10:42 a.m. and remaining inside until 3:20 p.m. DOI also compared the defendant's timesheets with surveillance video of the defendant's residence during the relevant time period,

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which showed the defendant was not at work, and was at his residence, during his scheduled shifts. In total, as alleged, the defendant was paid approximately \$5,873 in wages for time that he did not work. Paychecks for NYCHA employees are issued from NYCHA's headquarters in Manhattan.

MAESTRE was hired as a City Seasonal Aide for NYCHA's Bronx Floating Staff in June 2010, and was hired as a Caretaker in January 2011. He receives an annual salary of approximately \$46,278 and will be suspended based on the arrest.

DOI Commissioner Strauber thanked Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg and his staff for their partnership on this investigation, which was handled by Assistant District Attorney Stephanie Minogue of the Financial Frauds Bureau, under the supervision of Deputy Bureau Chief Hope Korenstein. Commissioner Strauber also thanked NYCHA CEO Lisa Bova-Hiatt and Board Chair Jamie Rubin for their cooperation on this investigation, and for NYCHA's referral of the matter to DOI.

At DOI, the investigation was conducted by Confidential Investigator Karen Smith with DOI's Office of the Inspector General for NYCHA, under the supervision of Assistant Inspectors General Enio Bencosme and Robert Joyce, Deputy Inspector General Gregory Deboer, Inspector General Ralph Iannuzzi, Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Initiatives Christopher Ryan, and Deputy Commissioner/ Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella.

A criminal complaint is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

*DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country and New York City's corruption watchdog. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City. DOI's strategy attacks corruption comprehensively through systemic investigations that lead to high-impact arrests, preventive internal controls and operational reforms that improve the way the City runs.*

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