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NEW JERSEY PROSECUTORS EMPLOY 125 DOUBLE-DIPPING 'RETIRES'; THEY TAKE \$8.6 MILLION A YEAR IN STATE PENSIONS PLUS SALARIES Investigative Report by Mark Lagerkvist

Posted On December 30, 2011



At age 48, Michael J. Trahey retired as the Bergen County prosecutor's chief deputy in 2004. The next day, he was back on the prosecutor's payroll with a different job title.

Thanks to his one-day "retirement," Trahey pockets \$207,000 a year. He receives [\\$92,000 in pension pay](#) plus [\\$115,000 in salary](#).

Trahey is one of 125 retired law enforcement officers employed by county and state prosecutors, a New Jersey Watchdog investigation revealed. Collectively, they rake in \$18.5 million a year — \$8.6 million per year in retirement pay plus \$9.9 million in salaries. (See below chart for names and exact amounts.)

According to New Jersey Watchdog's research, the prosecutors' double-dippers include:

- 56 retired municipal and county officers who work for county prosecutors;
- 37 retired state police officers employed by county prosecutors;
- Nine retired municipal and county officers on the payroll of the state Attorney General's Division of Criminal Justice; and
- 23 retired state officers who work as investigators and supervisors for DCJ and the Office of Attorney General, as [first reported Dec. 6](#) by [New Jersey Watchdog](#).

While their individual circumstances vary, they have one thing in common — two checks. On average, each receives nearly \$148,000 per year — \$79,000 in salary plus \$69,000 in pension pay.

The average age of retirement is 49. Unlike other public employees in New Jersey, they qualify for "special" [retirement](#) after 25 years of service regardless of age, according to Police & Firemen's Retirement System and State Police Retirement System rules.

Many retired officers work for prosecutors as investigators, detectives or supervisors. But the most common job title is "prosecutor's agent," a supposedly low-ranking, unclassified position with duties that vary from county to county. The job, exempt from pension rules, is often regarded as a patronage plum to put a friend or ally on the county prosecutor's payroll.

"Prosecutor's agents are full-time employees, who are generally retired police officers or recent college graduates...with the responsibility of assisting the prosecutor's detectives and assistant prosecutors with daily


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activities" states the [Ocean County prosecutor's website](#). However, one of the Ocean County prosecutor's agents is an 83-year-old retired judge drawing a \$40,000 salary.

Fifty-five retired officers, including Trahey, are employed as prosecutor's agents. [Trahey assumed that title on Jan. 2, 2004, one day after he retired](#) as the Bergen County prosecutor's deputy chief.

"Did I retire and start up right afterwards? I absolutely did," said Trahey. While he ranks as one of eight prosecutor's agents on Bergen's payroll, Trahey said he really functions as the prosecutor's "chief executive," supervising information technology and special projects.

According to Trahey, state pension officials gave him a "written approval" to start the new job immediately after retirement. He would not agree to provide a copy to New Jersey Watchdog.

As a one-day retiree, Trahey has collected more than \$700,000 in pension pay on top of his salary. He is far from alone.

Sixty-three of the 125 officers — just over half — "retired" for less than a month before going back to work. Forty-one of those were off work for one day or less. In 13 instances, the employees started their new jobs before they officially retired.

The quickie retirements appear to flout state pension rules. A retirement is only "bona fide" if "there is a good faith action to retire" and if "the employer/employee relationship is completely severed," including "a cessation of employment of at least 30 days," according to the [SPRS](#) and [PFRS handbooks](#).

If a retirement is not "bona fide," the employee is "required to reimburse the retirement system for the amount of any retirement benefits," and "there is no limitation on the amount of reimbursement" under pension rules.

Despite these rules, the double-dippers are unlikely to give up their dual checks or repay millions to state pension funds. That's because the attorney general and pension boards advised by the attorney general play key roles in interpreting and enforcing pension laws in New Jersey.

Systemic double-dipping by public officials is the focus of a series of ongoing New Jersey Watchdog investigations.

[In November](#), New Jersey Watchdog exposed triple-dipping by Gov. Chris Christie's budget adviser and cabinet secretary. During the past nine years, Louis C. Goetting IV has raked in \$1.1 million from taxpayers through two severance payouts and an early retirement deal. He now collects \$219,000 a year from the state — a \$130,000 salary plus \$89,000 in pension payments.

[In September](#), New Jersey Watchdog revealed that 16 sheriffs and 28 undersheriffs from 20 counties collect \$3.25 million per year in pensions in addition to their county salaries.

[Last year](#), New Jersey Watchdog found evidence implicating Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno, Christie's second-in-command, in an alleged scam that cost a state pension fund nearly a quarter-million dollars. As Monmouth County sheriff, Guadagno made false statements that enabled a top aide to double-dip. The Attorney General's Office is [investigating](#) the case.

But who will investigate the Attorney General's own "retired" investigators?

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NEW JERSEY WATCHDOG'S LIST OF 125 DOUBLE-DIPPERS EMPLOYED BY PROSECUTORS

| Employer | Name | Total/Yr | Salary/Yr | Pension/Yr | Retired |
|--------------|----------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------------|
| Ocean | Kuyl, Charles A | \$ 209,257 | \$ 139,585 | \$ 69,672 | State Police |
| Bergen | Trahey, Michael J | \$ 207,451 | \$ 114,967 | \$ 92,484 | Bergen County |
| Bergen | Carroll, Matthew J | \$ 205,316 | \$ 124,472 | \$ 80,844 | State Police |
| Cumberland | Johnson, William T | \$ 203,867 | \$ 117,443 | \$ 86,424 | State Police |
| Atty General | Hess, Edgar J | \$ 196,288 | \$ 116,128 | \$ 80,160 | State Police |
| Atty General | Morris, Paul S | \$ 195,779 | \$ 114,647 | \$ 81,132 | State Police |
| Passaic | Lyons, Robert A | \$ 193,305 | \$ 124,233 | \$ 69,072 | Passaic County |
| Monmouth | Gamberg, John C | \$ 192,964 | \$ 117,328 | \$ 75,636 | State Police |
| Union | Buccino, Robert T | \$ 192,844 | \$ 160,000 | \$ 32,844 | State Police |
| Ocean | Malast, William S | \$ 189,136 | \$ 91,240 | \$ 97,896 | State Police |
| Warren | Trauger, Kirk T | \$ 188,957 | \$ 113,477 | \$ 75,480 | State Police |
| Monmouth | Maestrey, Arnaldo V | \$ 187,868 | \$ 113,000 | \$ 74,868 | State Police |
| Atty General | Zichello, Nicholas J | \$ 186,570 | \$ 99,618 | \$ 86,952 | State Police |
| Bergen | Wistner, August III | \$ 186,350 | \$ 124,742 | \$ 61,608 | State Police |
| Atty General | Melson, Robert D | \$ 185,237 | \$ 117,701 | \$ 67,536 | Cherry Hill Twp |
| Middlesex | Merkler, Robert K | \$ 183,221 | \$ 98,933 | \$ 84,288 | South Plainfield |
| Sussex | McCormick, Thomas | \$ 182,600 | \$ 107,948 | \$ 74,652 | State Police |
| Atty General | Quirk, Edward P | \$ 181,573 | \$ 112,249 | \$ 69,324 | State Police |
| Monmouth | Padula, Steven L | \$ 181,329 | \$ 89,301 | \$ 92,028 | Monmouth Co |
| Mercer | Paglione, Albert J | \$ 180,166 | \$ 79,954 | \$ 100,212 | Mercer Co |



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|--------------|-----------------------|------------|------------|-----------|---------------------|
| Warren | McCormick, James P | \$ 177,741 | \$ 91,389 | \$ 86,352 | State Police |
| Cape May | Weeks, Mark K | \$ 177,210 | \$ 86,754 | \$ 90,456 | State Police |
| Cape May | Cradock, Marshall A | \$ 175,218 | \$ 86,754 | \$ 88,464 | State Police |
| Warren | Graupe, Brian E | \$ 173,121 | \$ 91,389 | \$ 81,732 | State Police |
| Atty General | Feltri, Dion | \$ 172,171 | \$ 103,039 | \$ 69,132 | Ocean County |
| Atty General | Smith, John A | \$ 172,149 | \$ 95,037 | \$ 77,112 | State Police |
| Atty General | Weidman, Frederick J | \$ 171,886 | \$ 101,446 | \$ 70,440 | State Police |
| Atty General | Evans, Lawrence J | \$ 170,999 | \$ 88,739 | \$ 82,260 | New Brunswick |
| Union | DeBiase, Joseph F Jr | \$ 170,977 | \$ 87,181 | \$ 83,796 | State Police |
| Atty General | Salzmann, David F | \$ 170,298 | \$ 97,458 | \$ 72,840 | State Police |
| Atty General | Lane, Richard H | \$ 170,052 | \$ 84,684 | \$ 85,368 | State Police |
| Gloucester | Perna, William J Sr | \$ 169,957 | \$ 95,749 | \$ 74,208 | State Police |
| Warren | Roncoroni, James E | \$ 169,117 | \$ 99,157 | \$ 69,960 | State Police |
| Atty General | Mai, Mark M | \$ 168,347 | \$ 97,139 | \$ 71,208 | State Police |
| Hunterdon | Rowe, Kenneth S | \$ 168,313 | \$ 89,197 | \$ 79,116 | State Police |
| Somerset | Giannini, Brian | \$ 167,044 | \$ 98,704 | \$ 68,340 | State Police |
| Union | Donovan, Dennis P | \$ 166,796 | \$ 83,972 | \$ 82,824 | State Police |
| Hunterdon | Molinaro, James P | \$ 166,628 | \$ 81,656 | \$ 84,972 | State Police |
| Atty General | Lucas, William W | \$ 166,567 | \$ 103,039 | \$ 63,528 | Trenton City |
| Atty General | Loufik, Richard A | \$ 165,257 | \$ 87,581 | \$ 77,676 | State Police |
| Atty General | Kendig, Patrick J | \$ 165,130 | \$ 100,810 | \$ 64,320 | State Police |
| Atty General | Drummond, Alan | \$ 164,722 | \$ 100,810 | \$ 63,912 | State Police |
| Cumberland | Phifer, Walter G | \$ 164,340 | \$ 94,488 | \$ 69,852 | State Police |
| Union | Danco, Anton W | \$ 164,169 | \$ 68,289 | \$ 95,880 | Clark Twp |
| Atty General | Saiia, Joseph C II | \$ 163,934 | \$ 78,890 | \$ 85,044 | State Police |
| Camden | Auletta, Alfred F Sr | \$ 162,699 | \$ 71,415 | \$ 91,284 | Trenton City |
| Atty General | Macciocca, Donald R | \$ 161,489 | \$ 87,581 | \$ 73,908 | State Police |
| Atty General | Rozwadowski, Ronald C | \$ 161,170 | \$ 100,810 | \$ 60,360 | State Police |
| Bergen | Stallone, William J | \$ 160,304 | \$ 81,500 | \$ 78,804 | Bergen County |
| Morris | Primo, Thomas J | \$ 160,171 | \$ 90,547 | \$ 69,624 | State Police |
| Atty General | Kent, Robert W | \$ 159,874 | \$ 100,810 | \$ 59,064 | State Police |
| Ocean | Cohen, Michael H | \$ 159,462 | \$ 90,414 | \$ 69,048 | Howell Twp |
| Atty General | Davis, William P | \$ 159,161 | \$ 87,581 | \$ 71,580 | State Police |
| Mercer | Wilkins, Thomas | \$ 158,707 | \$ 71,947 | \$ 86,760 | Hamilton Twp |
| Atty General | Carlin, Richard | \$ 157,990 | \$ 100,810 | \$ 57,180 | State Police |
| Atty General | Salvatore, Joseph C | \$ 157,561 | \$ 89,533 | \$ 68,028 | Trenton City |
| Hunterdon | Price, James E | \$ 156,248 | \$ 81,656 | \$ 74,592 | State Police |
| Sussex | Roll, Edward D | \$ 155,263 | \$ 82,363 | \$ 72,900 | State Police |
| Sussex | Porter, Douglas | \$ 155,155 | \$ 82,363 | \$ 72,792 | State Police |
| Mercer | Taylor, James P | \$ 153,993 | \$ 74,109 | \$ 79,884 | Mercer Co |
| Atty General | Royle, Michael J | \$ 153,601 | \$ 89,533 | \$ 64,068 | Atty General |
| Warren | Mezzanotte, Clement J | \$ 153,069 | \$ 91,389 | \$ 61,680 | State Police |
| Atty General | Ferris, Robert M | \$ 151,699 | \$ 103,039 | \$ 48,660 | Gloucester County |
| Cumberland | Tobolski, Ronald T | \$ 151,374 | \$ 70,410 | \$ 80,964 | State Police |
| Sussex | Higgins, Patrick J | \$ 150,466 | \$ 95,494 | \$ 54,972 | State Police |
| Somerset | Scozzafava, Jeffrey M | \$ 150,232 | \$ 98,704 | \$ 51,528 | State Police |
| Union | Adams, Richard J | \$ 149,982 | \$ 65,622 | \$ 84,360 | Union Twp |
| Morris | Gouck, Gary E | \$ 148,588 | \$ 74,872 | \$ 73,716 | Randolph Twp |
| Atty General | Callery, Edward R | \$ 146,893 | \$ 89,533 | \$ 57,360 | Trenton City |
| Essex | Ries, Michael S | \$ 146,876 | \$ 68,000 | \$ 78,876 | Atty General |
| Sussex | Voris, Dean S | \$ 145,740 | \$ 63,084 | \$ 82,656 | State Police |
| Atty General | Sheeran, John A | \$ 145,337 | \$ 87,581 | \$ 57,756 | State Police |
| Salem | Cuzzupe, John S | \$ 144,847 | \$ 60,643 | \$ 84,204 | State Police |
| Monmouth | McCormick, Guy G | \$ 143,707 | \$ 48,439 | \$ 95,268 | Monmouth Co |
| Atty General | Saunders, William J | \$ 143,689 | \$ 92,917 | \$ 50,772 | Atty General |
| Burlington | Scowcraft, Steven R | \$ 143,272 | \$ 58,000 | \$ 85,272 | State Police |
| Sussex | Catalano, Charles | \$ 142,479 | \$ 117,519 | \$ 24,960 | State Police |
| Atty General | Culp, Thomas E | \$ 140,134 | \$ 100,810 | \$ 39,324 | Scotch Plains Twp |
| Ocean | Koehler, Louis A | \$ 139,166 | \$ 39,650 | \$ 99,516 | Toms River Twp |
| Atty General | Bacsik, Kenneth A | \$ 138,625 | \$ 89,533 | \$ 49,092 | Div of Crim Justice |
| Middlesex | Ducca, William F | \$ 138,528 | \$ 75,000 | \$ 63,528 | Highland Park Boro |
| Atty General | Contreras, Ruben T | \$ 137,269 | \$ 89,533 | \$ 47,736 | Essex Co |
| Union | Mason, Robert J | \$ 137,012 | \$ 68,408 | \$ 68,604 | Springfield Twp |
| Salem | Bratty, Robert | \$ 133,651 | \$ 60,643 | \$ 73,008 | State Police |
| Warren | Harzer, William F | \$ 130,440 | \$ 77,496 | \$ 52,944 | Warren County |
| Mercer | Notta, Stephen A | \$ 129,175 | \$ 53,107 | \$ 76,068 | Trenton City |
| Middlesex | Miller, Robert L | \$ 127,760 | \$ 57,416 | \$ 70,344 | N Brunswick Twp |
| Union | Byron, Vincent F | \$ 127,092 | \$ 45,000 | \$ 82,092 | Essex County |
| Gloucester | Donovan, William Jr | \$ 125,661 | \$ 75,057 | \$ 50,604 | Gloucester County |
| Burlington | Marter, Robert C | \$ 125,288 | \$ 49,400 | \$ 75,888 | Mt Laurel Twp |

| | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| Atlantic | Talavera, Darren | \$ 124,629 | \$ 49,677 | \$ 74,952 | State Police |
| Ocean | Jennings, Ronald E | \$ 124,509 | \$ 40,245 | \$ 84,264 | Wall Twp |
| Middlesex | Gately, Peter J | \$ 124,332 | \$ 59,676 | \$ 64,656 | Plainsboro Twp |
| Ocean | Nasatka, James J | \$ 123,585 | \$ 40,245 | \$ 83,340 | Brick Twp |
| Union | Hogan, Kenneth J | \$ 123,009 | \$ 57,909 | \$ 65,100 | Irvington Twp |
| Atty General | Crescenz, Charles M | \$ 122,785 | \$ 89,533 | \$ 33,252 | State Police |
| Essex | Lagattuta, Charles P | \$ 121,960 | \$ 55,000 | \$ 66,960 | Cedar Grove Twp |
| Cape May | Skill, Vicki L | \$ 120,996 | \$ 53,040 | \$ 67,956 | North Wildwood |
| Burlington | Fischer, Tod M | \$ 120,732 | \$ 60,000 | \$ 60,732 | Evesham Twp |
| Mercer | Hancikovsky, Gary J | \$ 120,666 | \$ 56,358 | \$ 64,308 | Hamilton Twp |
| Ocean | Dishon, James L | \$ 120,525 | \$ 40,245 | \$ 80,280 | Ocean Co |
| Mercer | Richardson, Wesley W | \$ 118,096 | \$ 67,036 | \$ 51,060 | Trenton City |
| Mercer | Johnson, Marvin H | \$ 117,955 | \$ 53,215 | \$ 64,740 | Trenton City |
| Cumberland | Cuff, Ernest R | \$ 117,505 | \$ 65,053 | \$ 52,452 | Bridgeton City |
| Burlington | O'Dwyer, Robert E | \$ 116,427 | \$ 56,019 | \$ 60,408 | Hamilton Twp |
| Union | Duffy, William J | \$ 113,184 | \$ 47,976 | \$ 65,208 | Clark Twp |
| Cape May | Majane, Francis P | \$ 112,673 | \$ 67,745 | \$ 44,928 | Lower Twp |
| Atlantic | McFadden, Joseph | \$ 111,128 | \$ 53,792 | \$ 57,336 | Atlantic City |
| Ocean | Kroney, Roger D | \$ 110,853 | \$ 40,245 | \$ 70,608 | Toms River Twp |
| Monmouth | Weinkofsky, Charles B | \$ 108,016 | \$ 40,000 | \$ 68,016 | Ocean Twp |
| Essex | McGarry, John J | \$ 107,148 | \$ 53,580 | \$ 53,568 | East Orange City |
| Mercer | Stout, Raymond M | \$ 106,803 | \$ 62,439 | \$ 44,364 | Trenton City |
| Cape May | Loefflad, Paul A | \$ 105,766 | \$ 53,134 | \$ 52,632 | Middle Twp |
| Mercer | Kieffer, Darwin W | \$ 105,543 | \$ 51,399 | \$ 54,144 | Hamilton Twp |
| Mercer | Kemler, Robert | \$ 103,239 | \$ 51,399 | \$ 51,840 | Trenton City |
| Morris | Aria, Lois A | \$ 103,196 | \$ 50,000 | \$ 53,196 | Hudson County |
| Union | Madden, Joseph F | \$ 102,182 | \$ 46,790 | \$ 55,392 | Union Twp |
| Cumberland | Velez, Beny | \$ 101,507 | \$ 50,303 | \$ 51,204 | Vineland City |
| Union | D'Andrea, Anthony | \$ 99,361 | \$ 49,933 | \$ 49,428 | State Police |
| Atlantic | Cavanaugh, Brian | \$ 98,430 | \$ 34,758 | \$ 63,672 | Hamilton Twp |
| Ocean | Panzarino, Michael T | \$ 94,917 | \$ 40,245 | \$ 54,672 | Toms River Twp |
| Warren | Vernotica, John J | \$ 90,543 | \$ 55,695 | \$ 34,848 | Warren County |
| Monmouth | Mayo, Wesley Sr | \$ 89,126 | \$ 47,966 | \$ 41,160 | Long Branch City |
| Ocean | Chant, Thomas E | \$ 88,245 | \$ 40,245 | \$ 48,000 | Toms River Twp |
| Atlantic | Martella, Raymond | \$ 81,132 | \$ 32,448 | \$ 48,684 | Atlantic County |
| TOTAL | | \$18,533,823 | \$9,932,931 | \$8,600,892 | |
| AVERAGE | | \$ 148,270 | \$ 79,463 | \$ 68,807 | |

New Jersey Watchdog's research focused on current employees of New Jersey county prosecutors, the Office of Attorney General and Division of Criminal Justice, who draw retirement pay from state pension funds. Data are from pension, payroll and personnel records obtained from the New Jersey Department of Treasury, Civil Service Commission and individual counties through state Open Public Records Act requests. Pension amounts and employment status are current as of December 2011.

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