



How Common Is 'White-Collar' Police Misconduct?

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Officials announced Fox Lake police Lt. Charles Joseph Gliniewicz staged his suicide as a homicide and he embezzled thousands of dollars from the department's youth program. But how common is that kind of misconduct within law enforcement?

Misconduct of any kind happens everywhere and in every profession. It happens particularly with anyone who has access to a large fund.

That's according to Jonathan Blanks, a research associate for the Cato Institute...a libertarian think tank.

Blanks says sexual crime and inappropriate relationships are more common in police youth programs than embezzlement or money laundering. But he says he's encountered similar theft cases with local police union groups ... and with police gas card funds.

"Because a lot of times the police officers drive their cruisers home, they get free gas from the state," Blanks said.

Blanks says he's seen cases where cops use those cards for their personal vehicles and rake up thousands of dollars that way, but the Fox Lake case is the first one he's seen with embezzlement in an Explorer's program.

Illinois lawmakers passed the Police and Community Relations Improvement Act in August. It includes a section that says police departments are required to submit a record of violations to the state.

The Act says a board will keep a database that includes the names of dismissed cops and the nature of the misconduct.