



## Whistle-blowers made parking manager prosecution possible

Published: Tuesday, September 11, 2012, 8:00 PM



By **Letters to the editor**

Print publication: Wednesday, Sept. 12

The recent guilty plea of former city parking manager Ellis McCoy provided some much-needed closure to a case involving a significant betrayal of the public trust (**"Former parking chief likely to do time," Aug. 31**). While the federal prosecutors deserve credit for putting the final punctuation on this yearslong saga, the several Portland Bureau of Transportation employees who first blew the whistle on McCoy are also deserving of recognition.

The PBOT employees reported their concerns to various channels within the city, but it was not until they sought the ear of the city ombudsman that real traction was found. In response to the complaints about McCoy, the ombudsman's office conducted an investigation and, believing McCoy violated federal criminal laws, referred the case to the FBI.

Even in the best-run cities, bad behavior happens. Public employee reporting is an essential part of our government accountability apparatus. Indeed, under the city's administrative rules, public employees have an affirmative duty to report unlawful or improper actions. Of equal importance is having a protocol in place to timely and effectively respond to reported misconduct.

In the wake of the McCoy scandal and informed by our 2009 audit on fraud reporting, my office took the additional step of establishing an avenue for completely anonymous reporting. (The tip line may be accessed through links on [portlandoregon.gov/auditor](http://portlandoregon.gov/auditor) or by calling 866-342-4148.)

Even with an anonymous tip line, it still takes mettle to act. The PBOT employees who reported McCoy's malfeasance displayed courage and ethical fortitude, setting a positive example for other public employees. Without their willingness to raise their concerns and risk reprisal, justice might never have been realized.

LaVONNE GRIFFIN-VALADE  
Portland city auditor

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Former parking manager  
Ellis McCoy in 2011