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State Police union sues to block changes amid new payroll abuse claims



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The union that represents State Police troopers filed a lawsuit Thursday to block the policy changes handed down by department leaders amid claims that union members abused paid leave.

By [Matt Rocheleau](#)

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The union that represents State Police troopers filed a lawsuit Thursday that seeks to block policy changes handed down by department leaders amid claims that union members [abused paid leave](#).

The request for an injunction, filed in Suffolk Superior Court, alleges State Police officials acted unilaterally and unfairly by implementing the changes without negotiating.

The lawsuit mimics a recent complaint lodged with the state labor relations department by the State Police Association of Massachusetts, or SPAM. The union is pushing back against, without directly addressing, accusations levelled last month by

Colonel Kerry Gilpin. She said an internal review had found that some troopers were using the union as an excuse to take paid leave.

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In a letter to the union, Gilpin vowed to crack down on troopers who use a taxpayer-funded time-off benefit for illegitimate purposes.

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The agency will require advance written notice for leave, and union members are now barred from using departmental resources, including cruisers, for union business. Also, State Police will no longer pay the salaries of two full-time union positions — the president and an executive board member.

SPAM's injunction said Gilpin also declared that any union official on leave could no longer work overtime, details, or get paid for court appearances.

The union, which represents nearly all of the agency's 2,150 officers, claims these practices and benefits are afforded under decade-old union contract terms.

A State Police spokesman said Thursday the department hopes the union will work with Gilpin "to address the inappropriate use of union release time."

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The department is mired in [numerous controversies](#), including state and federal criminal probes into alleged payroll abuse. The head of the union, [Dana Pullman](#), abruptly resigned late last month amid a separate federal investigation into the possible illegal reimbursement of campaign donations by union members. He cited "personal reasons" for leaving the union and was replaced by Sergeant Mark Lynch.

The same day Pullman resigned, Gilpin wrote her letter to the union accusing troopers of abusing paid leave.

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