

Suffolk cop accused of \$7G theft

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A Suffolk police sergeant was arrested on theft and corruption charges Tuesday after authorities said he stole more than \$7,000 from the department by falsifying timesheets to collect an extra 12 paid days off.

Robert Kall, 48, of Shoreham, pleaded not guilty at his arraignment Tuesday before Judge Gaetan Lozito in First District Court in Central Islip, online court records show. He was released on his own recognizance after surrendering to the district attorney's office. He has been suspended without pay.

The 12 paid days off are valued at \$7,429.24, according to a news release from the district attorney's office. Kall has been a Suffolk police officer since September 2000 and a sergeant since May 2014.

Kall is accused of falsifying police records to show that he had worked 12 full shifts between Feb. 3, 2016, and July 17, 2018, the release stated. On nine days, he first recorded himself as not working and later allegedly changed attendance records to state that he had worked full shifts. He is accused of additionally reporting himself as completing three other full shifts despite not showing up for work.

The district attorney's office examined cell site records of Kall's cellphone, his access pass usage at the Seventh Precinct and location records of his police vehicle, authorities said.

The police department's Internal Affairs Bureau referred Kall's case to the district attorney's office after a supervisor noticed a discrepancy in the sergeant's time and atten-

dance, Police Commissioner Geraldine Hart said in the release.

"Misconduct of any kind is taken seriously and will not be tolerated in this department," Hart said. "Residents should be assured that our officers are committed to their profession and Kall's conduct is not reflective of the Department's dedication to service."

Kall's Hauppauge lawyer, Anthony La Pinta, said his client, a patrol sergeant in Yaphank's Seventh Precinct, did nothing wrong, which will eventually be proved.

"Sergeant Kall did not steal or take money that he wasn't entitled to," La Pinta said. "In fact, when the time records are carefully reviewed, they will show that he is owed money for the shifts and tours that he worked."

Kall is charged with three felonies — third-degree grand larceny, first-degree falsifying business records and third-degree corrupting the government — as well as a misdemeanor offense of official misconduct, online court records show.

He faces a maximum sentence of 2½ to 7 years in prison on the grand larceny charge, as well as a maximum possible fine of \$14,858.48, according to the district attorney's office.

"Robert Kall's alleged actions constitute a serious violation of the trust instilled in him by the Suffolk County Police Department and the public he was tasked with protecting and serving," District Attorney Timothy Sini said in the release. "The Suffolk County District Attorney's Office will not tolerate the theft of taxpayer funds and deception by public officials."

Kall is due to return to court on June 4.

CALL FOR END TO GENDER PAY GAP

Women get only 80% on LI, group notes in backing suit

BY JAMES T. MADORE
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Female workers on Long Island are paid 80 cents for every \$1 earned by their male counterparts, a pay gap that local and state leaders on Tuesday vowed to end.

In Hauppauge, county legislators, nonprofit executives, soccer coaches and four young athletes held a news conference in support of a lawsuit filed by the U.S. women's soccer team. The team alleges disparate pay and treatment by the United States Soccer Federation compared with the U.S. men's soccer team.

The local group chose Equal Pay Day, which symbolizes how far into the new year women need to work to make what men did in the previous year, to appeal to the public to sign a petition endorsing the lawsuit by the women's soccer team.

In Albany, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo on Tuesday urged the State Legislature to pass bills prohibiting employers from asking job applicants for their salary history, a practice many believe keeps women's salaries low. Last year, Suffolk County banned salary history from job applications in the public and private sectors.

Suffolk Legis. Kara Hahn (D-Sea-tauket), the majority leader, said Tuesday that the lawsuit by the women's soccer team "presents an important teachable moment for our children about gender disparity and the ongoing fight for women's equal rights."

She said she and her two daughters, all soccer players, are dismayed that the women's soccer team is paid less than the men's team despite having a far better record.

Hahn said she wrote to U.S. Soccer Federation president Carlos Cordeiro on Monday to protest the pay inequity. She also started the petition on change.org and hopes to gather 75,000 signatures



Kara Hahn, Suffolk County legislator, joined by advocates, officials and young athletes, calls for support for legislation to promote gender equity within employers and organizations.

before the FIFA Women's World Cup competition begins in France on June 7.

Hahn's 12-year-old daughter, Hope, who plays on a traveling soccer team, said she wants to play at the college and international levels someday.

"It would be very disappointing to work just as hard, commit just as much, practice just as long and sacrifice equally — only to be paid less and promoted less just because we are girls," she told more than two dozen people gathered at the Suffolk County Legislature. "There should be equal pay for equal play."

Peyton Phillips, 12, of East Sea-tauket, said the male coach of her girls' lacrosse team is paid less than the coach of the boys' lacrosse team. "I don't think it's fair," she said. "He works just as hard."

In Nassau County, the median income for women working full time was \$61,056 in 2017 compared with \$72,943 for men, according to the most recent avail-

able estimates from the Census Bureau. In Suffolk, the median income for women working full time was \$51,918 in 2017 compared with \$68,658 for men.

Most of the women at the news conference wore red "to symbolize that women are 'in the red' in terms of pay," said Colleen Merlo, chairwoman of the advocacy group Gender Equity Coalition. "This issue is not just a women's issue; it affects children and families because women are the primary earners in 40 percent of households with children."

Critics of Equal Pay Day events said they ignore the progress women have made since 1980 in closing the earnings gap with men.

"The gender pay gap is shrinking because women are making different educational and career choices," said Merrill Matthews of the conservative think tank Institute for Policy Innovation in Irving, Texas. "The left ignores those changes because it needs victims, not success stories."