

# MARGARET CHIARA'S FALSELY-ACCUSED "LOVER" RE-HIRED

I'm really happy to see that DOJ has re-hired Leslie Hagen, the woman who was falsely tied to Margaret Chiara in the US Attorney firing scandal. But I'm a little curious about the timing.

On Monday, the Justice Department undid a small part of the damage that top officials caused in a scandal of politicized hiring and firing during the Bush administration. The department rehired an attorney who was improperly removed from her job because she was rumored to be a lesbian.

NPR first broke the story of Leslie Hagen's dismissal last April, and the Justice Department's inspector general later corroborated the report. Now, Hagen has returned to her post at the department's Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys.

In 2006, Hagen was the liaison between the main Justice Department and the U.S. Attorneys' committee on Native American affairs.

[snip]

Last year, the Justice Department posted Hagen's old job again. The department conducted a national search.

Applications came in from around the country. After several rounds of interviews, Hagen eventually won the job.

The paperwork makes it official as of Monday, Feb. 2. Hagen now has her old position back, but this time it's a little different. Her contract no longer

comes up for renewal every year. Now, the job is permanent.

This appears to be effectively a re-hired based on a national search, and not the Mukasey (or Filip, as Acting AG) undoing some of the damage that the Gonzales DOJ did.

And speaking of Gonzales, there's one more part of this that will make you spit: as NPR points out, Hagen has had to pay her own legal fees throughout this process.

Nobody official from the department ever apologized to her for what happened. She still owes thousands of dollars in attorney fees, and the Justice Department has refused to pay those bills.

Meanwhile, you and I are paying Gonzales' legal fees, so he can defend himself against charges that he politicized hiring by—among other things—okaying Hagen's firing because she was alleged to be a lesbian.

The Justice Department has agreed to pay for a private lawyer to defend former Attorney General Alberto Gonzales against allegations that he encouraged officials to inject partisan politics into the department's hiring and firing practices.

Lawyers from the Justice Department's civil division often represent department employees who're sued in connection with their official actions. However, Gonzales' attorney recently revealed in court papers that the Justice Department had approved his request to pay private attorney's fees arising from the federal lawsuit.

Something's wrong with this picture.