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Around South Florida

MIAMI-DADE

INSPECTOR GENERAL GIVEN WIDER BERTH

Miami-Dade Inspector General Christopher Mazzella received greater autonomy Tuesday in carrying out his office's primary mission: sniffing out cases of public corruption and waste.

The Miami-Dade County Commission unanimously approved a measure that gives the inspector general -- and his successors -- greater independence and job security.

Previously, the inspector general's office, which has rooted out or assisted in dozens of cases since its creation six years ago, operated under the umbrella of the county's Commission on Ethics and Public Trust. The members of the ethics commission also selected the inspector general.

Under the new rules, the county's inspector general will be given a four-year term and will be selected by a committee made of the state attorney, public defender, ethics commission chair, president of the police chiefs association and the local head of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

Firing Mazzella would require a two-thirds majority vote by the County Commission.