



Department of Justice

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Western District of Tennessee

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24 CURRENT AND FORMER IRS EMPLOYEES INDICTED FOR BENEFITS FRAUD

Memphis, TN – United States Attorney Edward L. Stanton III and Shelby County District Attorney General Amy Weirich announced today that 24 current and former employees of the Internal Revenue Service have been charged for crimes relating to fraudulently obtaining more than \$250,000 in government benefits.

Thirteen of the current and former IRS employees have been charged federally with making false statements to obtain unemployment insurance payments, food stamps, welfare, and housing vouchers. All thirteen, individually charged in separate indictments, are alleged to have falsely stated that they were unemployed while applying for or recertifying those government benefits.

“According to the allegations in the indictment, while these IRS employees were supposed to be serving the public, they were instead brazenly stealing from law-abiding American taxpayers,” said U.S. Attorney Edward L. Stanton III. “These charges demonstrate our unwavering resolve to work with our law enforcement partners and hold accountable anyone who fraudulently obtains government benefits and violates the public’s trust.”

The 13 IRS employees charged are Angela Allison, 37; Jessica Davis, 35; Serina Gaither, 37; Teresa Jenkins, 46; Joanne Johnson, 46; Cynthia McKinney, 38; Angela Scales, 28; Dorothy Simmons, 35; Mary Weeks, 61; Evonna Yarbrough, 42, all of Memphis; Gale Baker, 54, of Cordova, TN; Shari House, 45, of Jackson, TN; and Talaria Mitchell, 35, of Southaven, MS. Each has been charged with multiple counts of false statements, in violation of Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code. A conviction under that statute can result in up to five years in prison.

The charges resulted from cooperation between numerous federal and state agencies. In addition to the U.S. Attorney’s Office and the Shelby County District Attorney General’s Office, the investigation involved the U.S. Department of Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration; the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General, Office of Labor Racketeering and Fraud Investigations; the U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of Inspector General; the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Inspector General; the United State Marshals Service; the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce

Development; the Tennessee Department of Human Services; the Shelby County Sheriff's Office; and the Memphis Housing Authority.

Eleven other former and current IRS employees were charged by the District Attorney General's Office with theft of property over \$1,000, a class D felony.

"The taxes that we pay are supposed to support our nation and assist individuals in need, not free-loaders who are gaming the system," said District Attorney General Amy Weirich. "Taxpayers can take comfort in knowing that we take these matters seriously and that we will prosecute these individuals to the fullest extent possible."

The 11 charged by the state are Raya Banks, 47; Clara Cannon, 61; Alma Childers, 64; Cathryn Fair, 50; Robert Graves, 60; Mechell Hampton, 35; Nicole Nickson, 39; Diane Malone, 56; Myra Thompson, 32; Katina Thurman, 39; and Pamela Williams, 47, all of Memphis.

The federal cases are being prosecuted for the United States Attorney's Office by Assistant United States Attorney Jonathan Skrmetti. The state cases are being prosecuted for the Shelby County District Attorney General's Office by Kirby May.

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The charges and allegations contained in the indictment are merely accusations, and the defendants are considered innocent unless and until proven guilty.