



Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, AUGUST 18, 2006
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**THREE MORE INDICTED IN BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA,
ON FRAUD CHARGES RELATED TO HURRICANE DISASTER RELIEF PROGRAMS**

BATON ROUGE, LA – United States Attorney David R. Dugas announced that a federal grand jury returned indictments yesterday against three more Louisiana residents on fraud charges related to hurricane disaster relief programs.

ALETHA ALLEN, age 45, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was charged in a three-count indictment with making a false and fraudulent claim for disaster assistance benefits (Count One), illegal use of a Social Security number (Count Two), and illegal conversion of government property, that is, a check from FEMA for expedited disaster assistance (Count Three). If convicted on Counts One or Two, ALLEN faces a maximum sentence of five years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine per count. If convicted on Count Three, ALLEN faces a maximum sentence of ten years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

LETITIA PARKER, age 21, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was charged in a two-count indictment with making a false and fraudulent claim for disaster assistance benefits (Count One) and with illegal conversion of government property, that is, a check from FEMA for expedited disaster assistance (Count Two). If convicted on Count One, PARKER faces a maximum sentence of five years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. If convicted on Count Two, PARKER faces a maximum sentence of ten years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

BENONI PRELOW, age 26, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was charged in a two-count indictment with illegal conversion of government property, that is, two checks from FEMA for expedited disaster assistance. If convicted, PRELOW faces a maximum sentence of ten years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both, for each count.

These charges resulted from an investigation conducted by the U.S. Secret Service.

These three individuals bring to sixty-eight the total number of defendants who have been charged in the Middle District of Louisiana with violations related to Hurricane Katrina relief funds.

In September 2005, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales created the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, designed to deter, investigate and prosecute disaster-related federal crimes such as charity fraud, identity theft, procurement fraud and insurance fraud. The Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force – chaired by Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division – includes the FBI, the U.S. Inspectors General community, the U.S. Secret

Service, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Executive Office for United States Attorneys and others.

For further information, contact David R. Dugas, U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Louisiana, or Lyman Thornton, First Assistant U.S. Attorney, at (225) 389-0443. Anyone suspecting criminal activity involving disaster assistance programs can make an anonymous report by calling the toll-free Hurricane Relief Fraud Hotline, 1-866-720-5721, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, until further notice. Information can also be emailed to the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force at HKFTF@leo.gov or sent by surface mail, with as many details as possible, to Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4909.

NOTE: An indictment is a determination by a grand jury that there is probable cause to believe that offenses have been committed by the defendant. The defendant, of course, is presumed innocent until and unless he/she is proven guilty at trial.

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