



Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2008
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TWO MORE CHARGED WITH DISASTER RELIEF FRAUD IN BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

BATON ROUGE, LA – United States Attorney David R. Dugas announced that two more Louisiana residents were charged Monday in federal court with fraud related to a hurricane disaster relief program.

STEPHANIE WILLIAMS DONAHUE, age 35, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was charged in a bill of information in federal court on November 17, 2008, with illegal conversion of government property (Count One) and making false statements (Count Two). The bill of information alleges that in or about May 2006, DONAHUE and others obtained, without authority, a check issued by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to another person who was a true Hurricane Katrina victim in the amount of \$10,391.51. The bill alleges that DONAHUE and others caused the FEMA check to be cashed by means of forging the signature of the payee of the check, thereafter dividing the proceeds of the check among themselves.

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), through the East Baton Rouge Housing Authority, provided rental assistance to eligible low-income households through the Section 8 rental assistance program. Eligibility for Section 8 rental assistance was determined, in part, by total monthly household income, which was required to be reported during the initial certification of eligibility and periodic re-certifications of eligibility. The bill of information filed Monday further alleges that from on or about March 1, 2005, through on or about October 15, 2007, DONAHUE made false representations to HUD, through the East Baton Rouge Housing Authority, in providing certification and re-certifications of eligibility for rental assistance payments. It is alleged that DONAHUE, in these certifications, failed to disclose approximately \$2,500 in monthly household income. The charges resulted from an investigation conducted by the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Inspector General, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General. If convicted on Count One, DONAHUE faces a maximum sentence of ten years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both. If convicted on Count Two, DONAHUE faces a maximum sentence of five years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both.

ANGELICA M. WILLIAMS, age 27, of Donaldsonville, Louisiana, was also charged in a bill of information in federal court on November 17, 2008, with making false statements. After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, HUD and FEMA provided assistance to victims of the hurricanes, in part, through grants to homeowners to fund the repair and restoration of storm damaged homes. In Louisiana, grants under this program were called Road Home Grants. The bill alleges that on or about September 19, 2007, WILLIAMS applied for a Road Home Grant, claiming

ownership of a storm damaged mobile home. It is alleged that WILLIAMS caused the signature of another to be forged on a false bill of sale and receipts, fraudulently representing that she was the prior owner of the mobile home. The bill alleges that WILLIAMS submitted the fraudulent documents to HUD and FEMA in support of the application, resulting in a loss of approximately \$28,966.60. The charges resulted from an investigation conducted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Inspector General and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General. If convicted, WILLIAMS faces a maximum sentence of five years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both.

Monday's charges bring the total number of individuals who have been charged in the Middle District of Louisiana with violations related to hurricane disaster relief funds to one hundred sixty-five.

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.

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