



# PRESS NOTICE

## W. WALTER WILKINS UNITED STATES ATTORNEY DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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**September 2, 2009**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### ANOTHER DSS CHECK CASHER PLEADS GUILTY More Indictments Expected

Columbia, South Carolina ---- United States Attorney W. Walter Wilkins stated today that Ronald Bennett, age 50, of Columbia, South Carolina, pled guilty to theft of federal program funds for his role in an alleged scheme to embezzle more than \$5.2 million dollars from DSS. Bennett admitted to cashing five DSS checks that were procured by fraud and to recruiting others to cash additional checks.

Paul Timothy Moore was indicted in February for allegedly using his position as the DSS Finance Director to authorize the issuance of hundreds of DSS checks between May 2004 and October 2008, in the approximate average amount of \$7,000.00 each. The checks were made payable to names provided by co-conspirator, Jonathan Moses, age 42, of Columbia, who also recruited the named individuals to cash the checks and split the proceeds. On June 30, 2009, Jonathan Moses pled guilty to conspiracy to commit mail fraud, wire fraud and theft of government property. He also pled guilty to money laundering.

Moore was recently released from federal custody and is awaiting trial.

The maximum possible penalty for theft of federal program funds is ten years and a fine of \$250,000.00.

Mr. Wilkins stated, "Stealing money from DSS that could have been used to help the needy and underprivileged is reprehensible. These guilty pleas affirm our office's commitment to

prosecute those who illegally line their pockets with public dollars. We are committed to vigorously prosecuting each and every individual involved in any respect in this scheme.”

Mr. Wilkins stated that the case is being investigated by agents of the United States Secret Service and SLED, and that he has assigned the case to Assistant United States Attorney Debbie Barbier of the Columbia office for prosecution.

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