



U.S. Department of Justice

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TAX RETURN PREPARER PLEADS GUILTY **TO ASSISTING IN PREPARATION OF FALSE INCOME TAX RETURN**

LITTLE ROCK, AR – Bud Cummins, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas and Cleve Daniels, Special Agent In Charge, IRS Criminal Investigation – Nashville Field Office, announced that Tina Y. Hampton, 44, of Little Rock, Arkansas, pled guilty today before U.S. District Chief Judge Susan Webber Wright to aiding and assisting in the preparation of a false income tax return. The offense carries a maximum penalty of up to three years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. Hampton's retrial had been scheduled to start today after the jury in a prior trial was unable to reach a verdict.

“As the 2007 filing season approaches, taxpayers are reminded to choose a reputable return preparer and to verify the accuracy of their tax return before signing it,” stated Daniels.

In March 2006, a federal Grand Jury charged Hampton with 21 counts if aiding and assisting in the preparation of false tax returns. According to the indictment, from January 2002 through approximately mid-April 2004, Hampton, an employee of H & R Block in Little Rock, willfully input fraudulent amounts on her clients' tax returns before electronically submitting the returns to the Internal Revenue Service for refunds. The false items pertained to materially false and/or inflated charitable contributions, unreimbursed job expenses, unreimbursed business expenses, education credit, and medical-dental expense deductions. The indictment charges that Hampton prepared more than 80 fraudulent returns over the three year period, resulting in a tax loss of more than \$153,000. These inflated deductions and credits also resulted in larger refunds for her clients, and presumably increased her client base.

This investigation was conducted by IRS Criminal Investigation.

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