

# ***NEWS RELEASE***

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## ***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA***

*San Diego, California*

*United States Attorney  
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*For Immediate Release*

### **21 DEFENDANTS CHARGED FOR CORRUPTION AT TWO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA DMV OFFICES**

#### **NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - May 2, 2012**

United States Attorney Laura E. Duffy announced today that employees at the California Department of Motor Vehicles (“DMV”) in San Diego County were charged in a criminal complaint for their involvement in a long-running bribery conspiracy that resulted in the production of hundreds of fraudulent driver licenses for applicants who had failed – or not taken – the required driver license tests.

The complaint alleges that DMV officials at the El Cajon DMV office, located at 1450 Graves Avenue, El Cajon, California, and the Rancho San Diego DMV office, located at 1901 Jamacha Road, El Cajon, California, falsely entered both “passing” written and “passing” driving test scores for applicants in exchange for bribes ranging up to \$3,000 per license.

In addition to the DMV employees, 16 other defendants were charged in the complaint. According to the charging documents, these 16 other defendants are applicants who paid bribes to receive fraudulent driver licenses, or recruiters who brokered the corrupt deals for fraudulent licenses by getting money from the

applicants and paying the bribes to the DMV employees.

According to court documents, the corruption scheme involved the fraudulent production of both Class C (regular) and Commercial Class A driver licenses. Hundreds of applicants paid recruiters approximately \$400-\$500 for each fraudulent Class C license, which the conspirators produced at the El Cajon DMV. The complaint alleges that the DMV employees named in the complaint accepted bribes paid by these applicants despite the obvious public safety risk posed. For example, one DMV employee admitted to a recruiter that an applicant taking a driving test was so dangerous that she was “gonna kill someone.” The DMV employee, however, provided a fraudulent license to the dangerous applicant in exchange for a bribe the recruiter because he “need[ed] cash.”

According to the complaint, applicants seeking Commercial Class A licenses, produced at the Rancho San Diego DMV, typically paid recruiters \$2,500-\$3,000. Commercial Class A driver licenses allow the licensee to drive commercial vehicles weighing more than 10,000 pounds, which can cause enormous harm to the public if operated incorrectly by an unqualified driver. The complaint further alleges that DMV employees entered false passing test scores that allowed applicants to fraudulently obtain additional certifications for specific operations of the commercial vehicles, such as transporting hazardous materials or towing multiple trailers. The United States Attorney emphasized that these fraudulent certifications posed a significant threat to public safety, given that an unqualified driver could then transport hazardous materials or tow multiple trailers on the public roads.

For both Class C and Commercial Class A licenses, the recruiters told the applicants that, if they paid the fee, they would not have to take any of the required tests in order to receive a license. The complaint alleges that the recruiters made good on their claim as Jim Lynn Bean, Jeffrey Thomas Bednarek, Scott David Friedli, and Marco Beltran took advantage of their positions as DMV employees to enter fraudulent passing written and driving test scores into the DMV database. These DMV employees were responsible for conducting driving tests

for driver license applicants, but by entering false information, circumvented the DMV's driver license application process.

All 21 defendants were charged with conspiracy to commit bribery and to produce unauthorized identification documents, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 371. In addition, defendants Bean, Bednarek, Friedli, and Beltran were charged with one count of bribery, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 666(a)(1)(B). The operator of the U.S. Driving School in El Cajon, Kuvan Adil Piomari, was charged with one count of bribery, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 666(a)(2). The defendants taken into custody today are expected to make their initial appearances before United States Magistrate Judge William V. Gallo on May 3, 2012.

United States Attorney Duffy commented that this criminal complaint and arrests are the result of an active, ongoing criminal investigation. If anyone in the community has information about corruption at the DMV, they are asked to contact the Federal Bureau of Investigation at 1-877-NO-BRIBE (662-7423), or the DMV's Investigations Branch-Office of Internal Affairs at 626-851-0173.

**DEFENDANTS**

**Criminal Case No. 12MJ1576**

Jim Lynn Bean  
Kuvan Adil Piomari  
Jeffrey Thomas Bednarek  
Scott David Friedli  
Marco Beltran  
Gabriela Villanueva  
Bashar Asaad Azaria  
Reenan Esa Kuza  
Usman Aliyev  
Abdulmaged Alhokair  
Ahmad Alarbeed  
Mohammed Alsuwaidi  
Ali Rashid Al-Sowaidi  
Khalid Abdulaziz Al-Sowaidi  
Talal Bass Almousharji  
Virginia Pena  
Yontar Gizem

Douri Zafer  
Asiel Bahjat Tomika  
Angel Salvador Astimibay  
Bekzad Mirhanov

### **SUMMARY OF CHARGES**

Count 1: Title 18, United States Code, Section 371 -- Conspiracy to Commit Bribery and to Produce Unauthorized Identification Documents -- statutory maximum sentence of 5 years' custody, a maximum fine of \$250,000, and \$100 special assessment. **All defendants**

Count 2: Title 18, United States Code, Section 666(a)(1)(B) -- Bribery -- statutory maximum sentence of 10 years' custody, a maximum fine of \$250,000, and \$100 special assessment. **As to defendants: Jim Lynn Bean, Jeffrey Thomas Bednarek, Scott David Friedli, and Marco Beltran**

Count 3: Title 18, United States Code, Section 666(a)(2) -- Bribery -- statutory maximum sentence of 10 years' custody, a maximum fine of \$250,000, and \$100 special assessment. **As to defendant Kuvan Adil Piromari**

### **INVESTIGATING AGENCIES**

Federal Bureau of Investigation  
California Department of Motor Vehicles – Investigations Division

**A complaint is not evidence that the defendants committed the crimes charged. The defendants are presumed innocent until the Government meets its burden in court of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.**