



# Department of Justice

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## **SNELLVILLE MAN AND FORMER DRIVER'S LICENSE EXAMINERS SENTENCED FOR SELLING GEORGIA DRIVER'S LICENSES**

### *136 Fraudulently Obtained Licenses Issued In Lithonia*

ATLANTA, GA – HARIKRISHNA A. PATEL, 28, of Snellville; SHIJUANNA V. COBB, 35, of Ellenwood; RICKELL M. PATTERSON, 32, of Conyers; and ANGELA RENEE READ, 40, of Chicago, Illinois, were sentenced today by United States District Judge Orinda D. Evans for conspiring to issue Georgia driver's licenses to people who did not qualify for them, but who were willing to pay up to \$7,000 per license.

“Corruption in public employment is never acceptable,” said Acting United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates. “This office has a long tradition of investigating and prosecuting those who violate the public’s trust in any level of government, whether they abuse their positions for cash or other benefits. These convictions and sentences demonstrate that the prosecution of corruption in public employment remains a top priority of federal law enforcement in the Northern District of Georgia.”

“Counterfeit identity documents like the ones produced by this ring can be used by criminals, essentially anyone who's seeking to mask their identities and hide their true intentions,” said Kenneth Smith, Special Agent in Charge of U. S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s Office of Investigations in Atlanta. “Given the public security implications, ICE is working closely with its local and federal law enforcement counterparts here in Atlanta and around the country to target these kinds of schemes and shut them down.”

PATEL was sentenced to two years in federal prison, to be followed by three years of supervised release, ordered to perform 40 hours of community service, and pay a fine of \$6,000. COBB and PATTERSON were each sentenced to five months in prison to be followed by four months of home confinement and three years of supervised release, and ordered to perform 40 hours of community service. READ was sentenced to six months of home confinement as part of two years of probation, and also ordered to perform 40

hours of community service. PATEL, COBB, PATTERSON and READ had each pleaded guilty last year to conspiring to produce and distribute false identification documents.

According to Acting United States Attorney Yates, the charges in the indictment, and other information presented in court: Between January and August 2007, HARIKRISHNA PATEL charged up to \$7,000 or more to obtain Georgia driver's licenses for illegal aliens and others who did not qualify for licenses under state law. COBB, PATTERSON and READ were driver's license examiners who worked at the Georgia Department of Driver's Services Service Center No. 67 in Lithonia. Once PATEL had customers lined up, he sent them to that Customer Service Center, where they would receive licenses from COBB, PATTERSON, or READ. The examiners did not require PATEL's customers to take any tests or to produce proof of legal residency in Georgia. PATEL later gave the examiners a share of the fees he collected. The conspirators caused the Driver's Service to issue 136 driver's licenses to people with the last name "Patel" and fictitious addresses. The Driver's Service cancelled those licenses after the conspiracy was discovered.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of the Department of Homeland Security, Bureau of Immigration & Customs Enforcement, and the Georgia Department of Driver Services.

Assistant United States Attorney William G. Traynor prosecuted the case.

For further information please contact Sally Q. Yates, Acting United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is [www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan).