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## **News Release**

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### **Minnesota District Court Clerk Indicted for Allegedly Fixing Tickets in Exchange for Money**

Earlier this week in federal court in Minneapolis, a senior clerk of court for the State of Minnesota's Fourth Judicial District was indicted for allegedly fixing traffic citations in exchange for money. Abdulkadir Mohamoud Afrah, age 43, of Hastings, was specifically charged with one count of wire fraud, one count of theft from an organization receiving federal funds, and one count of soliciting a bribe by an agent of an organization that receives federal funds. The indictment alleges that from 2008 through 2011, Afrah devised a scheme to dismiss tickets for failure to produce proof of car insurance in exchange for money.

A law enforcement affidavit filed in the case states that in March of 2010, authorities learned that Afrah was fixing tickets for people cited for no proof of insurance. In his professional capacity, Afrah reviews and processes traffic citations at the Violations Bureau in the Hennepin County Government Center. Specifically, he handles no-proof-of-insurance citations brought to him by members of the public. If presented with such a citation as well as an insurance card, Afrah has the authority to dismiss the ticket if the insurance company named on the card confirms that a policy was in force at the time the citation was issued. In order to dismiss the ticket, Afrah is required to enter information in the court's computer system, including the policy number from the applicable insurance card.

On January 10, 2011, a cooperating witness who was issued a citation allegedly met with Afrah and asked for his help with a ticket because he truly did not have insurance. Afrah purportedly told the man he could help him in exchange for \$278, which was the fine amount. Afrah then allegedly met with the cooperating witness again later in the day, walking with the cooperating witness to a nearby building, where Afrah accepted \$280 in cash. Afrah then reportedly told the cooperating witness that the citation would not go on his record. The court's electronic records indicate that Afrah dismissed the ticket at 4:10 p.m. that day. On January 19, 2011, the cooperating witness returned to the Violations Bureau, met with Afrah, and received a

receipt that showed the citation had indeed been dismissed.

Through further investigation, authorities discovered that between 2008 and 2011, Afrah dismissed at least 22 no-proof-of-insurance citations where the insurance policies cited in the court's computerized records did not actually cover the ticketed individuals. Those 22 citations are valued at more than \$6,100.

Afrah has worked for the State of Minnesota since March of 2003. If convicted of the federal charges now levied against him, he faces a potential maximum penalty of 20 years in prison on the wire fraud charge and ten years on each of the remaining two charges. All sentences will be determined by a federal district court judge.

This case is the result of an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, with assistance of the Fourth Judicial District. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Tracy L. Perzel.

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An indictment is a determination by a grand jury that there is probable cause to believe that offenses have been committed by a defendant. A defendant, of course, is presumed innocent until he or she pleads guilty or is proven guilty at trial.