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# **News Release**

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## **Minnesota District Court Clerk Charged with Fixing Tickets in Exchange for Money**

Earlier today in federal court in St. Paul, a senior clerk of court for the State of Minnesota's Fourth Judicial District was charged with fixing traffic citations in exchange for money. Abdulkadir Mohamoud Afrah was specifically charged with one count of bribery concerning programs that receive federal funds. The criminal complaint alleges that on January 10, 2011, Afrah accepted \$280 in exchange for dismissing a citation for no proof of car insurance. Afrah was arrested without incident this afternoon.

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 the 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 the ticket because he did not have insurance. Afrah purportedly told the man he could help 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 the citation would not go on his record. The court's electronic records indicate that Afrah dismissed the ticket at 4:10 p.m. On January 19, 2011, the cooperating witness returned to the Violations Bureau, met with Afrah, and received a receipt that showed the citation had been dismissed.

Through further investigation, authorities discovered that between 2008 and 2010, Afrah dismissed at least 19 no-proof-of-insurance citations where the insurance policies cited in the court's computerized records did not actually cover the ticketed individuals. Those 19 citations are valued at more than \$5,000.

Afrah has worked for the State of Minnesota since March of 2003. If convicted of the federal charge now levied against him, he faces a potential maximum penalty of ten years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. 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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A defendant, of course, is presumed innocent until he or she pleads guilty or is proven guilty at trial.