



Department of Justice

**United States Attorney Donald R. Burkhalter
Southern District of Mississippi**

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CONTACT: SHEILA WILBANKS

PHONE: (601) 965-4480

FAX: (601) 965-4409

TEXAS WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO KATRINA FRAUD

Gulfport, Miss. – Mary Hardy a/k/a Mary Allen, 45, formerly of Gulfport, Mississippi, now living in the San Antonio, Texas, area, appeared before U.S. Senior District Judge Walter J. Gex in federal court today to change her plea to guilty for submitting false statement to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) related to her husband's claim for Hurricane Katrina benefits, U.S. Attorney Donald R. Burkhalter announced.

Allen admitted that she made multiple false statements, and submitted multiple false documents for the purpose of misleading FEMA as to the Allens' residency at the time of Hurricane Katrina, and defrauding FEMA out of more than \$26,000.00 in funds and benefits. She further admitted making similar claims to receive money from Red Cross. Allen faces a maximum penalty of five years in prison and fines of up to \$250,000.00. She is scheduled for sentencing before U.S. Senior District Judge Walter J. Gex on July 13, 2010.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

In September, 2005, former Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales created the national Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, designed to deter, investigate and prosecute disaster-related federal crimes such as charity fraud, identity theft, procurement fraud and insurance fraud. The Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force - chaired by Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division, Lanny A. Breuer, includes members from the FBI, Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, the Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Labor Office of Inspector General, the Postal Inspector's Office and the Executive Office of United States Attorneys, among others.

Pursuant to the Justice Department initiative, a local Katrina Fraud Task Force, consisting of over 20 Federal and State law enforcement agencies, was formed in the Southern District of Mississippi to pursue and prosecute individuals who engage in fraud associated with the hurricanes.

If anyone has information concerning possible fraud being committed during the post-Katrina recovery effort, please call either the DHS-OIG Fraud Hotline at 1-866-720-5721 or the FBI Fraud Hotline at 1-800-225-5324.

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