



Department of Justice

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TROY MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO CORRUPTION CHARGE FOR IMPEDING COLLECTION OF UNPAID BUSINESS TAXES

DAYTON – Michael Preuss, 51, of Troy, Ohio, pleaded guilty in United States District Court here today to one count of corrupt endeavor to impede employee of the United States acting in an official capacity under the Internal Revenue laws, after fabricating a false release form for his bank account which had been levied by the IRS for collection of unpaid withholding taxes.

Carter M. Stewart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, and Robert L. Davila, Special Agent in Charge, Chicago Field Division, Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA), announced the plea entered today before United States Magistrate Judge Michael R. Merz. This case is assigned to United States District Judge Thomas M. Rose.

According to a statement of facts filed with Preuss's plea, he had been the sole proprietor of Bullies of Piqua and owed \$49,916.27 in back employee withholding taxes to the IRS at the time he sold the business in October 2006. Preuss deposited the proceeds from the sale of Bullies into his wife's checking account at Chase Bank. The IRS subsequently filed a tax levy for collection of the unpaid withholding taxes against that Chase account, along with another account in Preuss's name at Fifth Third Bank. Preuss legally obtained a release of the levy on his Fifth Third account but then used that release form to fabricate a fraudulent Release of Levy which he faxed to Chase Bank, causing Chase Bank to release the levied funds from his wife's account at Chase. The employee withholding taxes remain unpaid as a result of Preuss's fraudulent activities.

Preuss faces a possible sentence of up to three years in prison, one year of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. In addition, Preuss must pay restitution to the IRS in the amount of \$49,916.77 as part of his plea agreement. Judge Rose will set Preuss's sentencing for a later date.

Stewart commended the investigation by Treasury Inspector General agents, and Dayton Branch Chief and Assistant United States Attorney Laura Clemmens, who is prosecuting the case.

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