



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Dunn Lampton Southern District of Mississippi

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NINE ARRESTED FOR KATRINA FRAUD

GULFPORT, Miss. – Nine individuals were arrested and appeared in U.S. District Court on Wednesday, August 8th on charges of submitting false claims to FEMA, the Mississippi Development Authority, the Small Business Administration and the Department of Agriculture for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance funds, U.S. Attorney Dunn Lampton announced today.

Lisa D. Worthington of Evergreen, Alabama is charged in a ten count indictment with filing a false claim for government benefits, theft of government funds, making false statements to FEMA, mail fraud and wire fraud. If convicted on each count, Worthington faces a maximum of 140 years imprisonment and up to \$2,000,000.00 in fines.

Nealie Rudolph of Moss Point, Mississippi is charged in a seven count indictment with filing a false claim for government benefits, theft of government funds, making false statements to FEMA, and mail fraud. If convicted on each count, Rudolph faces up to 80 years imprisonment and up to \$1,500,000.00 in fines.

Ronnie R. Ford of Saucier, Mississippi is charged in an eight count indictment with filing a false claim for disaster assistance, making false statements to FEMA, theft of government funds, and wire fraud. If convicted on each count, Ford faces up to 100 years imprisonment and up to \$1,750,000.00 in fines.

Wesley R. Ford III is charged in a five count indictment with filing a false claim with FEMA, making a false statement to FEMA, wire fraud, and theft of U.S. government funds. If convicted, Ford faces up to 40 years imprisonment and up to \$1,000,000.00 in fines.

Jacquelyn Roton of Biloxi, Mississippi, is charged in a five count indictment with filing a false claim with FEMA, theft of U.S. government funds, making a false statement to FEMA, and wire fraud. If convicted, Roton faces up to 40 years imprisonment and up to \$1,000,000.00 in fines.

David Guttierrez, of Pass Christian, Mississippi, is charged in a seven count indictment with filing a false claim with FEMA, making a false statement to FEMA, wire fraud, and theft of U.S. government funds. If convicted, Guttierrez faces up to 80 years imprisonment and up to \$1,500,000.00 in fines.

Nelda Karen Fowler of Picayune, Mississippi, is charged in a ten count indictment with filing false claims with FEMA for disaster assistance, making false statements to FEMA, theft government funds, and committing wire fraud. If convicted on each count, Fowler faces up to 80 years imprisonment and up to \$2,250,000.00 in fines.

Patricia Spurlock of Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, is charged in a four count indictment with filing false claims with FEMA for disaster assistance, making false statements to FEMA, and theft of government funds. If convicted on each count, Spurlock faces up to 20 years imprisonment and up to \$750,000.00 in fines.

Mario LeLeaux of Biloxi, Mississippi, is charged in a seven count indictment with filing false claims with FEMA for disaster assistance, making false statements to FEMA, making false statements to the Mississippi Development Authority for Housing and Urban Development homeowner grant funds, theft of government funds, and food stamp fraud. If convicted on each count, Spurlock faces up to 45 years imprisonment and up to \$1,510,000.00 in fines.

The charges contained in these indictments are allegations only and the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless convicted at trial.

In September, 2005, 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, Alice S. Fisher, includes members from the FBI, 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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