



Department of Justice

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Southern District of Mississippi**

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BILOXI WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO KATRINA HOUSING ASSISTANCE FRAUD

Gulfport, Miss. –Vivian Griffin, of Biloxi, pled guilty in U.S. District Court today to receiving duplicate housing assistance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development following Hurricane Katrina, U.S. Attorney Stan Harris announced. Griffin applied for a housing voucher from the Decatur, Georgia Housing Authority after Hurricane Katrina but maintained her housing assistance with Biloxi Housing Authority during the same period of time. She was ordered by the U.S. District Judge Louis Guirola, to repay the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \$3,650.00 for the duplicate assistance she received when she maintained the two houses at one time. She was also ordered to perform 40 hours of community service, to be served while on active probation for three years. This case was investigated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

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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