



*United States Attorney  
Southern District of New York*

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**MANHATTAN U.S. ATTORNEY CHARGES NEW YORK CITY EMPLOYEE  
FOR THEFT OF WELFARE RECIPIENTS' BIRTH CERTIFICATES  
AND SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, CHRISTOPHER PAUL, the Special-Agent-in-Charge of the New York Field Office of the United States Department of State, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, and ROSE GILL HEARN, the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation, announced today the unsealing of an Indictment charging MICHAEL WILLS, an employee of the Human Resources Administration ("HRA") of the City of New York, with stealing copies of welfare recipients' birth certificates and social security cards and then selling them. The defendant was arrested yesterday and presented in Manhattan federal court.

As alleged in the Indictment filed in Manhattan federal court:

WILLS worked for HRA as a Clerical Associate in one of its job centers that provides welfare benefits to New York City residents. In that position, WILLS had access to copies of welfare recipients' birth certificates and social security cards. On numerous occasions in 2007 and 2008, WILLS took copies of those birth certificates and social security cards and sold them to another individual.

WILLS, 59, of New York, New York, is charged with one count of fraud with identification documents and one count of aggravated identity theft. The fraud with identification documents count carries a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison and a maximum fine of \$250,000, or twice the gross gain or loss from the offense; the aggravated identity theft count carries a mandatory minimum sentence of 2 years in prison. In addition, the Indictment seeks forfeiture of all proceeds of the alleged crimes.

Mr. BHARARA praised the investigative work of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and the New York City Department of Investigation.

The case is being prosecuted by the Office's Public Corruption Unit. Assistant United States Attorney CARRIE H. COHEN is in charge of the prosecution.

The charges against MICHAEL WILLS contained in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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