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**U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE CREATES NEW UNIT
TO PURSUE FORFEITURE OF CRIMINAL PROCEEDS
AND RESTITUTION FOR VICTIMS**

New Section Will Work Closely with Local and State Authorities

Baltimore, Maryland - U.S. Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein announced today that the U.S. Attorney's Office has established a new unit, the Asset Forfeiture and Money Laundering Section, with three lawyers and two paralegals to pursue forfeiture of criminal proceeds and restitution for victims in all cases.

"Seizing and forfeiting ill-gotten gains enables us to take the profit out of crime and use the proceeds to compensate victims," said U.S. Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein. "This new unit will work with federal authorities and with state and local officials on a wide range of cases in which federal forfeiture and money laundering statutes can help punish and deter crime. Federal laws allow us to pursue forfeiture of assets for many crimes, including mortgage fraud. Assets subject to forfeiture may include the fruits of crime – such as homes and vehicles purchased with criminal proceeds – and also the instrumentalities of crime – such as computers, vehicles and real estate used by criminals."

The new section will be responsible for working with state and local authorities on potential federal forfeitures, handling civil forfeitures, assisting with criminal forfeitures and restitution, overseeing Maryland's Suspicious Activity Report Review Teams and providing advice about money laundering and other financial crimes cases.

The asset forfeiture and money laundering prosecutors are Stefan Cassella and Richard Kay, who are based in the U.S. Attorney's Baltimore office, and Christen Sproule, based in the Greenbelt office.

Cassella, who will serve as chief of the new section, earned a B.S. from Cornell University and a J.D. cum laude from Georgetown University Law Center. He spent more than 20 years with the

U.S. Justice Department's Criminal Division, serving as Assistant Chief of the Asset Forfeiture and Money Laundering Section from 1994 to 2002 and the Deputy Chief from 2002 to 2007. Earlier in his career, Cassella was an Assistant State's Attorney for Montgomery County and a Maryland Assistant Attorney General. Cassella was sworn in today as an Assistant U.S. Attorney.

Kay earned a B.A. summa cum laude from the State University of New York and a J.D. with honors from the University of Maryland. Kay has been an Assistant U.S. Attorney for 19 years, specializing in asset forfeiture matters and serving as the coordinator for the Baltimore office.

Sproule earned a B.A. from Cornell University and a J.D. magna cum laude from Georgetown University Law Center. She served as a law clerk to U.S. District Court Judge Richard J. Leon and spent several years working for private law firms. Sproule joined the U.S. Attorney's Office in January to handle asset forfeiture and victim-related restitution matters in the Greenbelt office.

Supervisory Paralegal LaTonia Kelly and Paralegal Specialist Naquita Ervin also will join the new section.

Information about cases and priorities of the U.S. Attorney's Office is available at www.usdoj.gov/usao/md