The United States Attorney's Office

Northern District of Georgia

LITHONIA WOMAN INDICTED FOR COMPUTER FRAUD USING IRS COMPUTERS

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CONTACT: Patrick Crosby
(404)581-6016
FAX (404)581-6160

Griffin Worked for the IRS and Used IRS Computers to Fraudulently Obtain First-Time Home Buyer Tax Credits for Friends and Relatives

ATLANTA, GA - CATHERINE GRIFFIN, 46, of Lithonia, Georgia, has been indicted by a federal grand jury on charges of computer fraud by accessing information on government computers for private financial gain, relating to a scheme to fraudulently obtain "First-Time Home Buyer Tax Credits" for friends and relatives who were not eligible to receive the credits and had not purchased homes during the eligible time period. GRIFFIN was arraigned today before United States Magistrate Judge C. Christopher Hagy and released on bond.

United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates said of the case, "Millions of law-abiding citizens pay their fair share of taxes and do not have an insider at the IRS changing the numbers on a computer for them so they can pay less taxes. The defendant in this case allegedly was paid to change information in the IRS computer system to make it appear certain taxpayers were eligible for first-time homebuyer credits. Cheating like this has consequences."

"Abuse of a federal position by an IRS employee for the purpose of committing tax fraud is abuse of the public trust, plain and simple," said J. Russell George, the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration. "We vigorously investigate all such allegations of wrongdoing by IRS employees and make sure that those who are found to be involved in such fraudulent activity are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law."

According to United States Attorney Yates, the charges and other information presented in court: From approximately July 2009 to November 2009, GRIFFIN worked as a seasonal employee for the IRS in Chamblee, Georgia, processing amended tax returns filed by taxpayers. In her capacity as an IRS employee, GRIFFIN had access to the IRS computer system. The indictment alleges that GRIFFIN exceeded her authorized access of the IRS computer system to alter taxpayer information for approximately 4 individuals. In exchange for fraudulently altering these taxpayers' information, GRIFFIN received payments of $2,000.

The indictment charges GRIFFIN with 4 counts of exceeding authorized access of government computers to alter taxpayer data for private financial gain. The computer fraud charges each carry a maximum sentence of 5 years in prison and a fine of up to $250,000. In determining the actual sentence, the Court will consider the United States Sentencing Guidelines, which are not binding but provide appropriate sentencing ranges for most offenders.

Members of the public are reminded that the indictment contains only allegations. A defendant is presumed innocent of the charges and it will be the government's burden to prove a defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA).

Assistant United States Attorney Bernita B. Malloy is prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact Sally Q. Yates, United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.justice.gov/usao/gan.