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## **FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES ANNOUNCE FORMATION OF TASK FORCE TO FIGHT PUBLIC CORRUPTION**

United States Attorney Deirdre M. Daly and representatives from five federal law enforcement agencies today announced the formation of the Connecticut Public Corruption Task Force to investigate corrupt public officials, the misuse of public funds and related criminal activity.

The Connecticut Public Corruption Task Force includes representatives from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Postal Inspection Service, Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigation Division, and the Inspector General’s Offices of the United States Department of Health and Human Services and the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

“For the first time in Connecticut, we have brought together in a single investigative unit, agents and inspectors from the federal agencies that have primary responsibility for investigating public corruption,” said U.S. Attorney Daly. “Although each of these agencies has a history of working together, bringing some of the best agents in the state into one unit with a singular purpose of investigating all manner of corruption is an optimal way to address the complex and varied threats posed by corrupt activity.”

U.S. Attorney Daly explained that the Task Force is focused on rooting out not only corrupt elected officials, but also federal, state and municipal employees who use their position for personal gain at the expense of the public good. The Task Force also will investigate corruption that threatens public resources, the electoral process, and fair economic opportunities for citizens and businesses. In addition, the Task Force is charged with uncovering corruption within both public and private institutions that receive and misuse taxpayer dollars.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher M. Mattei, who is Chief of the U.S. Attorney’s Office’s Financial Fraud and Public Corruption Unit, is coordinating the Task Force. The FBI has committed resources to support all Task Force investigations and serves as the lead investigative agency.

“The New Haven Division of the FBI is joining forces with our federal agency partners to combat public corruption throughout the State of Connecticut,” said FBI Special Agent in Charge Patricia M. Ferrick. “With the assistance and cooperation of these partners, the Connecticut Public Corruption Task force is well positioned to successfully root out and put an end to public corruption within our area. Public servants are entrusted by all of us to act in the best interests of the public they serve. It is important for the United States to bring to justice those who betray that trust. Public corruption at all levels of local, state, and federal

government must not be tolerated, and this task force will leverage the best assets of the task force partner agencies to address the threat posed by corrupt public officials.”

The Task Force has been at work for several months and has already made significant gains in several investigations, including the recent arrest of the former Finance Director of Plymouth who is alleged to have embezzled more than \$800,000 from the town.

“The Postal Inspection Service has enjoyed a close relationship with the Connecticut U.S. Attorney’s Office through the years working intricate and complex fraud cases that involve the illicit use of the U.S. Mails,” said Inspector in Charge Shelly A. Binkowski of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. “The U.S. Postal Inspection Service welcomes the formation of the Connecticut Public Corruption Task Force, a partnership that presents a tremendous opportunity for various agencies to pool resources and expertise to ensure public officials are held accountable.”

“Investigating public corruption remains one of IRS Criminal Investigation’s highest priorities,” said William Offord, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service. “Public trust is broken when elected or appointed officials commit crimes – most often triggered by greed and resulting in unlawful personal financial gain. IRS agents contribute their financial investigative expertise to this formidable investigative team.”

“As part of the Public Corruption Task Force, HHS OIG will ensure that the department’s dollars are not misused through public corruption and are instead used for their intended purpose of ensuring that the most vulnerable members of our society – including the elderly, poor and children – receive services funded at least in part by taxpayers,” said Phillip Coyne, Special Agent in Charge of the Boston Regional Office of the Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General. “Working with our federal, state and local law enforcement partners, we will continue to vigorously bring those who steal from these programs to justice.”

“The core mission of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) includes creating strong, sustainable communities and quality affordable homes for all,” said Christina Scaringi, Special Agent in Charge of the Northeast Region of HUD’s Office of Inspector General. “To carry out its mission, HUD depends on the services of housing authority staff; owners and management agents of HUD-assisted multifamily developments; state, local, and municipal governments that receive HUD funding in the form of community development grants; and nonprofit organizations that administer a variety of programs including housing the homeless. HUD also oversees the administration of over \$150 million awarded to the State of Connecticut for Hurricane Irene and Sandy disaster relief purposes. HUD OIG is dedicated to aggressively pursuing those who choose to engage in corrupt behavior, and we are proud to be a part of this all-important task force.”

U.S. Attorney Daly encouraged citizens to report corrupt activity by calling **1-800-CALL-FBI (1-800-225-5324)**.

“Connecticut’s unfortunate recent history with corruption is well known, but so is this Office’s history of combating corrupt activity,” said U.S. Attorney Daly. “Our efforts have been aided by a dogged media and courageous, conscientious citizens, business owners and public officials who have provided information about corrupt activity in their midst. We call on public servants, the vast majority of whom are honest brokers, to not look the other way

when they see indications of corruption. We cannot overstate the importance of citizen participation in our fight against corruption, and we urge all citizens to assist us in this effort.”

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONTACT:**

**U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

Tom Carson

(203) 821-3722

[thomas.carson@usdoj.gov](mailto:thomas.carson@usdoj.gov)