



# PRESS RELEASE

Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation  
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## **BOGUS CHARITY OPERATOR SENTENCED TO 11 YEARS IN PRISON FOR ID THEFT AND WIRE FRAUD SCHEME**

*Scheme resulted in more than 500 false income tax returns being filed with IRS*

COLUMBUS – Jonathan Webster, 34, of Columbus, Ohio was sentenced to 108 months in prison for wire fraud and an additional 24 months in prison for aggravated identity theft. He was also sentenced to serve three years of supervised release, and ordered to pay \$1,457,936 in restitution to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for electronically filing more than 500 false federal income tax returns with the IRS. Webster previously pleaded guilty to these charges on September 3, 2013.

Carter M. Stewart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio and Kathy A. Enstrom, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation (IRS) announced the sentence handed down today by U.S. District Judge Michael H. Watson, who remanded Webster to the custody of the U.S. Marshals Service to begin serving his sentence immediately.

According to court documents, between January 2010 and February 2013 Jonathan Webster knowingly devised a scheme to defraud the IRS by filing false income tax returns using the names and Social Security numbers of individuals without their knowledge or consent. As part of this scheme, Webster used wire communications to electronically file more than 500 false income tax returns for the 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 tax years, claiming at least \$1,635,164 in refunds to which he knew he was not entitled to receive.

Webster set-up websites in the names of various fictitious charities which purported to offer financial assistance to those in need. The names of the fictitious charities included The Angel Charity and 4 the Glory Charity. In reality, none of the fictitious charities advertised by Webster provided any financial assistance to the individuals who submitted their personal identification information on the website. Rather, Webster collected that information, which included the individual's name, Social Security number and date of birth, and either used those identities to file false tax returns with the IRS or provided the information to others who assisted him in doing the same.

All of the over 500 false income tax returns were filed from various locations in Columbus, Ohio. These false income tax returns contained fabricated information as it related to the taxpayer, including occupations, income amounts, and expenses. The inclusion of this false information often qualified the taxpayer listed on the income tax return to receive the Earned Income Credit.

The income tax refunds were direct deposited into Webster's bank accounts or into bank accounts opened by third parties at Webster's direction.

Webster personally electronically filed at least 14 false income tax returns with the IRS for the 2012 tax year, and assisted in the filing of over 500 more false income tax returns with the IRS during the 2009 through 2011 tax years, all of which used stolen identities.

For the 2009 through 2012 tax years, the false income tax refunds claimed through this scheme resulted in an intended loss of \$1,635,164. For restitution purposes, the actual loss associated with this scheme is \$1,457,936.

"Mr. Webster perpetuated an elaborate scheme driven by insatiable greed and a blatant disregard for the tremendous damage inflicted on innocent victims," said Kathy A. Enstrom, Special Agent in Charge, IRS, Criminal Investigation, Cincinnati Field Office. "Today's announcement exemplifies IRS Special Agents' intense focus on the rigorous pursuit of identity theft and refund fraud. Be assured that IRS Criminal Investigation, together with our partners at the U.S. Attorney's Office, will hold those who engage in similar behavior fully accountable."

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jessica W. Knight and was investigated by special agents of IRS-Criminal Investigation.

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