



# PRESS RELEASE

Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation  
Cincinnati Field Office  
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## **LOCAL MAN PLEADS GUILTY IN 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 pleaded guilty to one count of aggravated identity theft and to one count of wire fraud relative to electronically filing more than 500 false federal income tax returns with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Webster faces a maximum of 20 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000, as well as a mandatory term of imprisonment of two years to run consecutive to any term of imprisonment imposed for the underlying felony.

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 guilty plea entered yesterday before U.S. District Judge Michael H. Watson.

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 with the IRS by 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 income 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 income tax year, and assisted in the filing of over 500 more false income tax returns with the IRS during the 2009 through 2011 income tax years, all of which used stolen identities.

For the 2009 through 2012 income 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.

"Individuals who commit identity theft and refund fraud of this magnitude deserve to be punished to the fullest extent of the law," said Kathy A. Enstrom, Special Agent in Charge, IRS, Criminal Investigation, Cincinnati Field Office. "Mr. Webster demonstrated a blatant disregard of the integrity of the United States tax system and caused immeasurable hardship to innocent victims. IRS Criminal Investigation remains committed to the pursuit of identity theft, and together with our partners at the U.S. Attorney's Office, we will hold those who engage in similar conduct accountable."

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

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