



PRESS RELEASE

Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation *Chief Richard Weber*

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IRS – Criminal Investigation

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Louisiana Return Preparer Pleads Guilty to Filing Fraudulent Tax Returns

Used IDs Stolen from Jailed and Arrested Individuals

A Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana return preparer pleaded guilty today to her role in a scheme to file federal tax returns using stolen IDs, announced Acting Deputy Assistant Attorney Stuart M. Goldberg of the Justice Department's Tax Division and U.S. Attorney Kenneth A. Polite for the Eastern District of Louisiana.

According to the documents filed with the court, from 2008 through 2016, Alicia Washington aka Alicia Keith, 41, and others obtained electronic filing identification numbers (EFINs) in the names of several tax return preparation businesses and used them to file fraudulent tax returns with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). To prepare these returns, Washington used stolen IDs belonging to individuals who had been arrested or jailed. Washington and others in the scheme directed the IRS to issue refunds in the form of checks and prepaid debit cards, which were then negotiated by co-conspirators working as check cashers.

Sentencing is scheduled for May 31 before U.S. District Court Judge Susie Morgan. Washington faces a statutory maximum sentence of five years in prison for the conspiracy count and a mandatory minimum of two years in prison for the aggravated identity theft count. Washington also faces a period of supervised release, restitution and monetary penalties.

Acting Deputy Assistant Attorney General Goldberg and U.S. Attorney Polite commended special agents of IRS-Criminal Investigation, who conducted the investigation, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Hayden Brockett and Trial Attorney Lauren Castaldi of the Tax Division, who are prosecuting this case.

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