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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MIDLAND MAN PLEADS GUILTY IN HURRICANE KATRINA FRAUD

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced today that Charles Gasper, of Midland, Texas, pled guilty to fraud relating to hurricane Katrina emergency assistance.

On November 16, 2005, a federal grand jury in Midland returned a one count indictment against Gasper charging him with False Representation of Social Security Number. According to the indictment, on September 29, 2005, Gasper falsely used a number, which he alleged to be his Social Security number, for the purpose of obtaining Hurricane Katrina related emergency assistance from the Red Cross, for which he was not eligible.

By pleading guilty, Gasper faces up to five years in federal prison and a maximum \$250,000 fine. This case was investigated by the Social Security Administration - Office of Inspector General together with the Midland Police Department. Assistant United States Attorney John Klassen is prosecuting this case on behalf of the Government.

In September 2005, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales created the Hurricane Katrina fraud Task Force, designed to deter, investigate and prosecute disaster-related federal crimes such as charity fraud, identity theft, procurement fraud and insurance fraud. The Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force – chaired by Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division – includes members from the FBI, the Federal Trade Commission, the Postal Inspector's Office and the Executive Office of the United States Attorneys, among others.

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