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**UNITED STATES ATTORNEY, FBI ANNOUNCE**  
**PUBLIC CORRUPTION INITIATIVE IN NORTHERN COUNTIES**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and MARK J. MERSHON, the Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI New York Field Office, announced today that the federal government is stepping up efforts to investigate and prosecute public corruption in Westchester, Rockland, Putnam, Dutchess, Orange and Sullivan Counties.

The initiative will include the commitment of significant additional joint resources by the U.S. Attorney's Office and the FBI, according to Mr. GARCIA and Mr. MERSHON.

As part of the effort, they announced the creation of a corruption hotline - 1-877-ENDGRAFT (1-877-363-4723)- through which members of the public can call and report potential abuses of the public trust by public officials.

Mr. GARCIA stated: "By setting up this hotline, we seek to encourage citizens to report abuses by public officials, with the knowledge that we will take appropriate follow-up action. The hotline is the latest example of the federal government's commitment to a partnership with the public to expose corruption at all levels of government."

Mr. MERSHON stated: "Rooting out public corruption remains a priority of the FBI nationally and in the New York region, because it is fundamental to maintaining public confidence in our elected and appointed officials. Those who govern in a democracy are supposed to act in the best interests of the people, not engage in self-dealing motivated by self-

interest. Most government officials conduct themselves with honesty and integrity, as do most people, generally. But we would no sooner reduce our vigilance over public corruption than a rational community would disband its police force."

The six northern counties that are included within the Southern District of New York cover approximately 3,500 square miles and are home to more than 2 million people. The six counties also contain some 170 cities, towns and villages.

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