



Department of Justice

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**FOUR CHARGED IN FRAUDULENT FLORIDA
DRIVERS LICENSE BRIBERY CONSPIRACY**

Tampa, Florida - United States Attorney Robert E. O'Neill today announced the unsealing of an indictment of Santos Alamo, 47, of Clearwater; Gustavo Soler, a/k/a Tao, 34, of Lutz; Serguei Leon, 43, of Homestead; and Eric Hernandez Suarez, 30, of Tampa. The defendants are charged in an indictment with conspiracy to defraud the public of its right to honest services. The defendants are also charged with substantive wire fraud violations as well as the unlawful production and transfer of identification documents.

The maximum penalties the defendants face if convicted are as follows: Count One (conspiracy) - - 5 years imprisonment followed by 3 years of supervised release and a \$250,000 fine; Counts 2 through 15 - - 20 years imprisonment (each count of wire fraud) followed by 3 years of supervised release and a \$250,000 fine; Counts 16, 17 - - 15 years imprisonment (each count of unlawful production and transfer of identification documents) followed by 3 years of supervised release and a \$250,000 fine.

According to the indictment, the defendants conspired to pay bribes to a public employee of the Pinellas County Tax Collector's Office in exchange for that employee's willingness to issue Commercial Drivers Licenses (CDLs) to unqualified applicants.

On July 17, 2007, Yolanda Pippins, age 47, pled guilty to conspiracy to making

false statements and to accepting bribes. Pippins faces a maximum sentence of five years' imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000. Pippins is scheduled for sentencing at 9:00 a.m. on March 19, 2008, before U.S. District Judge James S. Moody, Jr.

According to the plea agreement, Pippins worked at the Largo office of the Tax Collector. Among her responsibilities was the issuance of drivers licenses of all classes, including CDLs, which are used as identification documents. Pippins entered into an agreement with other conspirators pursuant to which she agreed to review the license applications of individuals that a co-conspirator would identify to her in advance. When the applicant would appear, Pippins agreed to qualify that applicant for the issuance of a CDL endorsement on his license, even though he did not present the necessary paperwork reflecting that he had passed the skills necessary to qualify for such an endorsement.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Inspector General; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; the Florida Department of Law Enforcement; and the Florida Highway Patrol; and will be prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Robert Monk.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws, and every defendant is presumed innocent until, and unless, proven guilty.