



# Department of Justice

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Eastern District of Texas

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## **CLEVELAND, TEXAS WOMAN INDICTED FOR HURRICANE RELATED FRAUD**

BEAUMONT TX – United States Attorney Matthew D. Orwig announced that a 46-year-old Cleveland, Texas woman was indicted today on charges of hurricane related fraud in the Eastern District of Texas.

**LORETTA TURNER** was indicted by a federal grand jury and charged with making a materially false statement to FEMA in connection with applications she filed for federal disaster relief.

U.S. Attorney Orwig said his office remained diligent in the pursuit of any form of hurricane fraud, "Hurricane related fraud will remain a priority in this office and we will continue to aggressively investigate and prosecute suspected violators."

According to the four-count indictment, beginning on or about September 30, 2005, Turner allegedly filed a claim with FEMA in which she requested Disaster Housing Assistance for losses she reportedly suffered from Hurricane Katrina. Turner received \$5,282.00 in assistance as a result of her fictitious claim.

If convicted, Turner faces up to five years in federal prison and a fine of up to \$250,000.00.

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 of the FBI, the Federal Trade Commission, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and the Executive Office for United States Attorneys, among others.

The case is being investigated by the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney John A. Craft.

**It is important to note that an indictment should not be considered as evidence of guilt and that all persons charged with a crime are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.**

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