



Department of Justice

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MOBILE RESIDENT SENTENCED FOR DEFRAUDING FEMA FOLLOWING HURRICANE KATRINA

MOBILE, AL— Governor Reiss, Sr., 55, was sentenced today for defrauding the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) following Hurricane Katrina, United States Attorney Deborah J. Rhodes of the Southern District of Alabama announced.

United States District Judge William H. Steele sentenced Reiss to a total of thirty-nine imprisonment followed by three years of supervised release. Reiss was also ordered to pay \$7,858 in restitution to FEMA in addition to a payment of \$5,000 that had already been made on Reiss' behalf.

The sentencing today followed Reiss' conviction after a jury trial in December. The charges against Reiss arose from an application for benefits submitted by him on September 30, 2005. Reiss listed a townhouse in New Orleans as his primary residence at the time of the hurricane. As a result of his application, Reiss received a total of \$12,858 in benefits from FEMA, including \$10,500 to assist in replacing the townhouse in New Orleans. However, federal prosecutors charged that Reiss in fact had already moved to Alabama prior to the storm. The final indictment against Reiss included a total of eight felony counts, including two counts of Aggravated Identity Theft. Reiss was convicted on all eight counts.

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 the FBI, the U.S. Inspectors General community, the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Executive Office for United States Attorneys, and others.

The case was investigated by the Department of Homeland Security Office of the Inspector General and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Daryl Atchison and Sean Costello.
