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For more information contact:
Managing Assistant U.S. Attorney Dixie Morrow
(850) 444-4000

PRESS RELEASE

Pensacola, Florida – Gregory R. Miller, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida, announced today the arrest of Holly M. Barnes after the return of a 34-count indictment by the federal grand jury. Nineteen (19) counts of the indictment allege that Barnes filed false and fictitious claims for refund with the Internal Revenue Service, and fifteen (15) counts of the indictment allege that Barnes committed identity theft, that is, Barnes used the identification of another person to commit a crime.

Barnes was indicted following an investigation by the State Attorney's Office for the First Judicial Circuit, the Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office, the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation, and the United States Attorney's Office. The indictment alleges that Barnes used her position of trust as a Girl Scout leader in Pea Ridge, Florida to obtain personal information from members of the Girl Scout Troop. The indictment alleges that Barnes created a fraudulent "Girl Scout Medical Release" form to obtain this information, which included the individual girls' Social Security Numbers (SSN). The indictment alleges that Barnes then used the children's SSNs to prepare and electronically file federal income tax returns with IRS, submitting false information regarding income and employment. The indictment alleges Barnes' false claims total more than \$187,000, and that she obtained more than \$87,000 from IRS by using the identities of the young Girl Scouts and of her own children.

Barnes is scheduled to make her initial appearance before United States Magistrate Judge Miles Davis at 11:00 in the United States District Court, Pensacola, Florida. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Stephen P. Preisser. Each false claim against the government charge carries a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000. Each identity theft charge carries a maximum penalty of 15 years imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000.

An indictment is merely a formal charge by the grand jury. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in United States District Court.