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**DECEMBER MARKS THE MOST PRODUCTIVE MONTH IN HISTORY OF
MARYLAND EXILE PROGRAM**

18 Defendants Charged With Gun and Related Drug Offenses

BALTIMORE, Maryland - A federal grand jury indicted seven men and one woman on gun and related drug charges last week as part of the Maryland EXILE program, announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein and Baltimore City State's Attorney Patricia C. Jessamy. Another defendant was charged with similar offenses last week in a federal criminal complaint. The new charges bring to 18 the total number of defendants charged in federal court with gun offenses in the month of December.

U.S. Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein said, "We are proud of the efforts of all of our Maryland EXILE partners to get armed criminals off of our streets. The Maryland EXILE partners are making steady progress toward our goal of ensuring that criminals do hard time for gun crime."

"These indictments reflect the coordinated efforts of local, state and federal law enforcement in our EXILE partnership," said State's Attorney Patricia C. Jessamy. "These efforts have led to many successful prosecutions of violent, repeat offenders who are now EXILED from our community. Together we are moving forward to make our citizens safe."

Maryland EXILE is a joint effort by local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies to combat gun crime that combines law enforcement efforts, community action and revitalization, and public awareness. Under Maryland EXILE, criminals do *hard time for gun crime*.

Last week, Donnell Jackson, age 24, Patrice Marriott, age 40, and Ronnie Moore, age 24, all of Baltimore, were indicted for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Eric Watson, age 25, was charged with the same offense by criminal complaint.

In addition, Gregory Gray, age 32, Darryl Smith, age 28, Anthony Stewart, age 25, and Hilray Lucas, age 57, all of Baltimore, were indicted and charged with possession with intent to distribute narcotics, possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug-trafficking crime, and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Christine Brzezinski, age 25, was charged with

making a false statement in connection with the purchase of a firearm, after she acted as a “straw purchaser” to enable Lucas to obtain a gun.

Earlier this month, James Anderson, age 24, Darryl Hill, age 23, Jamar Saunders, age 23, Robert Smith, age 25, and Ira Taylor, age 25, all of Baltimore, were indicted for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Frank Blackwell, age 27, was also charged with two counts of being a felon in possession of a firearm, arising from two separate arrests with firearms in 2007. Terrence Boone, age 24, of Baltimore was charged with the same offense by criminal complaint.

Also earlier this month, Maurice Cortez, age 34, of Baltimore, was charged with possession of a firearm by a convicted felon and possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug-trafficking crime, and Akiba Matthews, age 35, of Baltimore, was charged with possession with intent to distribute narcotics, possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug-trafficking crime, and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

A total of 20 firearms were seized in these cases.

The maximum penalty for possession of a firearm by a felon and making a false statement in connection with the purchase of a firearm is 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The maximum penalty for possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug-trafficking crime is life in prison and a \$250,000 fine. On the charges of possession with intent to distribute narcotics, some of the defendants face a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$1 million fine, while others face a maximum penalty of 40 years in prison and a \$2 million fine.

All of the newly charged defendants are being transferred to federal custody and their initial appearances have not yet been scheduled.

An indictment is not a finding of guilt. An individual charged by indictment is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein and Baltimore City State’s Attorney Patricia C. Jessamy thanked the Baltimore City Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives for their assistance in the investigations. Mr. Rosenstein and Ms. Jessamy commended Special Assistant United States Attorney James Francomano, a cross-designated Baltimore City Assistant State’s Attorney assigned to EXILE cases, who is prosecuting Donnell Jackson, Ronnie Moore, and Darryl Hill; Special Assistant United States Attorney Traci Robinson, also a cross-designated Baltimore City Assistant State’s Attorney assigned to EXILE cases, who is prosecuting James Anderson, Ira Taylor, and Terrence Boone; Assistant U.S. Attorney John Sippel, who is prosecuting Patrice Marriott, Jamar Saunders, Frank Blackwell, Anthony Stewart, Darryl Smith, and Eric Watson; Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephanie A. Gallagher, who is prosecuting Akiba Matthews; Assistant U.S. Attorney Cheryl Crumpton, who is prosecuting Maurice Cortez and Robert Smith; Assistant U.S. Attorney Debra L. Dwyer, who is prosecuting Hilray Lucas and Christine Brzezinski; and Assistant U.S. Attorney James Wallner, who is prosecuting Gregory Gray.