



AG LUTHER STRANGE ANNOUNCES FELONY GUILTY PLEAS IN CASE INVOLVING CORRUPTION AT THE GENERAL CONTRACTORS LICENSING BOARD

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Luther Strange announced that two former employees of the Alabama Licensing Board for General Contractors (“GC Board”) pleaded guilty on charges of ethics violations and criminal possession of forged instruments. Nancy C. Saffo, 51, of Pike Road, and Christy Easterling, 48, of Prattville, each pleaded guilty in Montgomery County Circuit Court to one count of intentionally using her official position for personal gain, a class B felony, and one count of criminal possession of a forged instrument in the second degree, a class C felony.

The GC Board protects the safety and welfare of all Alabamians by insuring that general contractors who perform large projects such as schools, hotels, and highways, meet minimum technical and financial standards. Those who cannot pass the required competency test, or who do not have the financial ability to reliably engage in large construction projects, are not issued a license.

After receiving information that some individuals had received a GC license through corruption, despite failing to meet the minimum standards, the Special Prosecutions Division (SPD) of the Attorney General's office initiated an investigation.

After a thorough investigation, the SPD determined that on multiple occasions, defendants Easterling and Saffo, who were licensing specialists at the GC Board, issued licenses to applicants who were unqualified in exchange for money. To execute the scheme, the defendants attached forged documents to the applications of the unqualified recipients. Over the course of the scheme, defendant Easterling received approximately \$32,000 and defendant Saffo received over \$60,000. The payments were made in cash and by checks that were deposited into the defendants’ personal bank accounts.

The SPD presented evidence of these crimes to a Montgomery County grand jury in July, and the defendants were indicted on multiple ethics and forgery charges. On December 8, 2016, defendants Easterling and Saffo both pleaded guilty in a Montgomery County Circuit Court to one felony count of use of official position for personal gain and one felony count of criminal possession of a forged instrument in the second degree.

"Critical government functions must be performed by honest public servants free from graft and corruption," said Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange. "My office has the capability to effectively enforce Alabama's ethics laws, and that is exactly what we will



continue to do. Those who abuse the public's trust can expect to be held accountable."

Attorney General Strange praised those involved in bringing this case to a successful conclusion, noting in particular Assistant Attorney General Katie Langer and Special Agents of his Special Prosecutions Division. He also thanked the Alabama GC Board for their cooperation in the investigation.