

# **Additional charges filed against Lynn Cawthorne and his sister related to defrauding a summer feeding program**

New counts of money laundering in indictment

Western District of Louisiana

**SHREVEPORT, La.** – United State Attorney David C. Joseph announced that a federal grand jury returned a superseding indictment today that adds 18 money laundering-related charges to the indictment of Lynn D. Cawthorne, 51, and Belena C. Turner, 47, both of Shreveport.

According to the superseding indictment, the Food and Nutrition Service is an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which administers the Child Nutrition Programs. The Child Nutrition Programs include the Summer Feeding Service Program (SFSP), which was established to ensure that children in low-income areas continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session during the summer.

United Citizens and Neighborhoods (UCAN) is a non-profit corporation that participated as a sponsor in the SFSP. Cawthorne is the president of UCAN and Turner represented herself to be its executive director. The indictment alleges that beginning sometime in early 2011 and continuing until sometime in December 2015, the defendants fraudulently obtained more than \$536,000 from the SFSP by engaging in numerous activities to defraud, which included filing claims for reimbursement that greatly inflated the number of eligible meals provided, thus claiming more children were fed at UCAN sites than were actually fed. Based on the inflated payments made pursuant to these false claims, money was transferred to catering companies and other entities

controlled by the defendants, all to help conceal the fact that Cawthorne and Turner improperly benefitted from the SFSP. According to the indictment, the defendants engaged in money laundering transactions to conceal the payment of personal expenses. These expenses included private school payments, travel, furniture, clothing, car repairs, meals at restaurants, and campaign expenses.

The defendants face 20 years in prison for each wire fraud and money laundering count. The defendants could also face fines of \$250,000 for each wire fraud count and \$500,000 for each money laundering count. The first indictment was filed on April 26, 2018 and included eight counts related to wire fraud.

The FBI, Louisiana State Inspector General, Caddo Parish Sheriff's Office, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture - Office of Inspector General investigated the case. First Assistant U.S. Attorney Alexander C. Van Hook and Assistant U.S. Attorney Tennille M. Gilreath are prosecuting the case.

**An indictment is merely an accusation and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.**