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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, October 3, 2016

Philadelphia Man Gets Two Years In Prison For Fraudulently Exchanging Over \$1.2 Million In Food Stamp Benefits For Cash

CAMDEN, N.J. – A grocery store owner from Philadelphia was sentenced today to 24 months in prison for stealing more than \$1.2 million through a food stamp scheme, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Kaher Abdullah, 58, previously pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Joseph H. Rodriguez to an information charging him with one count of theft of government funds. Judge Rodriguez imposed the sentence today in Camden federal court.

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court:

In June 2011, Abdullah opened Express Food Mart on South Broadway in Camden. Express Food Mart was a small grocery store that was authorized to accept Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits (formerly known as food stamps). The program is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Abdullah admitted he controlled a business bank account at CitiBank to receive the reimbursements for SNAP benefits. He knew that as a SNAP retailer, he was not allowed to exchange food stamps for cash.

From Nov. 1, 2011 through October 2014, he and others under his supervision illegally permitted recipients of SNAP benefits to redeem those benefits at Express Food Mart for cash rather than food. Abdullah admitted that, in general, he and other employees redeemed SNAP benefits for approximately 50 cents on the dollar. He also admitted that from November 2011 through October 2014, Express Food Mart received through its Citibank business account approximately \$1,264,006.47 for illegally redeemed



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SNAP benefits.

Abdullah admitted that shortly after receiving the money in the Express Food Mart account, he transferred the money to another account which he used to pay personal expenses.

In addition to the prison term, Judge Rodriguez ordered Abdullah to serve three years of supervised release and pay restitution of \$1,264,006.

U.S. Attorney Fishman credited special agents of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge William G. Squires in New York; and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Terence Opiola.

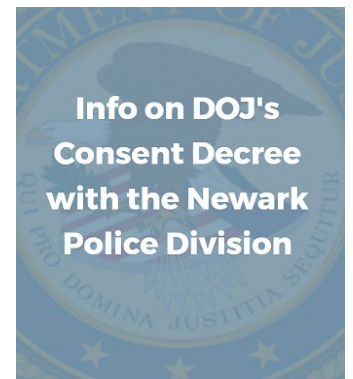
The government is represented by Senior Litigation Counsel Jason M. Richardson of the U.S. Attorney's Office Criminal Division in Camden.

Defense counsel: Justin Loughry Esq., Camden

Component(s):
USAO - New Jersey

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