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Contact Kylie Mason

Phone (850) 245-0150



OFFICE OF THE
ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Attorney General Ashley Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution Charges Nonprofit Director for Stealing Nearly \$3 Million



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution is charging an owner of a nonprofit organization participating in a state-funded program for stealing millions of dollars. Felicia Senetta Ali, owner and director of Rayfield School of Excellence, is charged with overbilling the State of Florida and defrauding taxpayers in a scheme lying about feeding children in need. The nonprofit provides meals during the summer months to children who qualify for free lunches throughout the school year. Ali inflated the reported number of meals provided, defrauding state funds out of more than \$2.8 million.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "This nonprofit owner took advantage of an essential government program providing free meals to vulnerable and hungry children to line her own pocket. Her deliberate and fraudulent scheme not only stole from valuable state resources but from Florida taxpayers. Thankfully, my Statewide Prosecutors working with the Miami-Dade Police Department put an end to her criminal racket and she will now face her crimes in court."

Miami-Dade Police Department Director Alfredo "Freddy" Ramirez III said, "It's despicable to see someone violate the community's trust by utilizing such a touching subject as child

hunger. I am extremely proud of the tireless work by the Miami-Dade Police Department, Public Corruption Section investigators and the collaborative efforts of the Attorney General Ashley Moody's statewide prosecutors, the Miramar Police Department and the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Public Corruption Taskforce. Every dollar stolen, is not only stolen from the community but from the needy children as well. We all shall come together to continue the fight against child hunger."

Rayfield School of Excellence, based in Hollywood, participates in the Summer Food Service Program that ensures children in low-income areas continue to receive meals when school is not in session. Only nonprofit organizations are eligible to participate and are required to submit an application to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

Ali spent the last several years running the nonprofit organization and intentionally inflated the reported number of provided meals in order to overbill the state and defraud taxpayers for personal enrichment. Ali knowingly requested the food-service provider at the nonprofit to alter invoices submitted to FDACS, amounting to nearly 500,000 fraudulent meals. According to the investigation, Ali also committed communications fraud by submitting fraudulent claims for payments of service through the government website. The investigation uncovered Ali's financial records that showed personal expenditures from the nonprofit account, including cash withdrawals, residential mortgage payments and checks to Ali's husband.

Ali is facing five felonies, including one count of organized scheme to defraud over \$50,000, one count of grand theft over \$100,000, and three counts of communications fraud.

Attorney General Moody's Assistant Statewide Prosecutor Nicole Garcia will prosecute the case.

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