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**FIVE INDICTED FOR ALLEGEDLY BRIBING A GSA OFFICIAL
TO OBTAIN FEDERAL CONTRACTS**

Greenbelt, Maryland – A federal grand jury has returned five indictments charging the owners of companies with bribing a General Services Administration (GSA) official to obtain contracts to provide painting and other maintenance services at federal facilities. All the indictments were filed under seal and the last one was unsealed yesterday upon the arrest of the defendant.

The individuals charged in the indictments are:

Carl Roberts, age 48, of Clinton, Maryland;
Ronald Wilkinson, age 60, of Brandywine, Maryland;
Robert W. Hales, a/k/a Bobby Hales, age 52, of Nanjemoy, Maryland;
Darold Patterson, age 72, of Deerwood, Maryland; and
Daryl Kitchen, age 59, of Upper Marlboro, Maryland.

The Roberts indictment was returned on July 15, 2013; the Wilkinson and Hales indictments were returned on August 12, 2013; and the Patterson and Kitchen indictments were returned on August 26, 2013.

The indictments were announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein; Inspector General Brian D. Miller, General Services Administration, Office of Inspector General; and Special Agent in Charge Stephen E. Vogt of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

GSA Inspector General Brian D. Miller said, “We will continue to pursue contractors who line their own pockets by bribing corrupt officials at the expense of the American taxpayers.”

According to the indictments, Roberts owned four general construction and moving companies that he operated out of his residence in Clinton; Wilkinson owned a painting company located in Brandywine; Hales owned and operated two painting companies located in Nanjemoy; Patterson was a co-owner and operator of a general contracting company located in Rockville, Maryland; and Kitchen owned a general contracting company located in Upper Marlboro.

Each indictment alleges that the defendants paid bribes to a building manager who at the time was cooperating with the government, in exchange for the building manager awarding GSA service contracts to the defendants' companies. GSA building managers were authorized to retain private contractors to complete maintenance projects on behalf of GSA and were further authorized to pay for maintenance projects that cost \$3,000 or less using their government issued GSA credit cards. According to the indictments, each of the contracts awarded to the defendants either cost less than \$3,000, or were charged by two separate invoices in order to keep the cost under \$3,000.

Specifically, the indictments allege that: Roberts paid bribes totaling \$1,300 in exchange for six contracts to Roberts' companies, for which he was paid \$8,724; Wilkinson paid bribes totaling \$650 in exchange for two contracts, for which Wilkinson was paid \$3,075; Hales paid bribes totaling \$400 in exchange for two jobs, for which Hales was paid \$3,300; that Patterson paid bribes totaling \$1,800 in exchange for two contracts for which Patterson was paid \$5,635; and that Kitchen paid bribes totaling \$950 in exchange for four contracts for which Kitchen was paid \$6,522.67.

The defendants face a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison for bribery. Roberts had an initial appearance yesterday. Hales, Wilkinson and Kitchen had initial appearances on September 5, 2013 and Patterson had an initial appearance on September 6, 2013. All of the defendants were released under the supervision of U.S. Pretrial Services.

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.

A sixth contractor, Andre Michael Lipford, age 43, of Washington, D.C., previously pleaded guilty to paying \$750 in bribes in exchange for two jobs for his company, for which Lipford was paid \$6,200. Lipford was sentenced to five months in prison, followed by five months of home detention as part of one year supervised release.

The National Procurement Fraud Task Force was formed in October 2006 to promote the early detection, identification, prevention and prosecution of procurement fraud associated with the increase in government contracting activity for national security and other government programs. The Procurement Fraud Task Force includes the United States Attorneys' Offices, the FBI, the U.S. Inspectors General community and a number of other federal law enforcement agencies. This case, as well as other cases brought by members of the Task Force, demonstrate the Department of Justice's commitment to helping ensure the integrity of the government procurement process.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein thanked GSA Office of Inspector General and FBI for their work in the investigation. Mr. Rosenstein praised Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kristi N. O'Malley and Kelly O'Connell Hayes, who are prosecuting the case.