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Quincy Woman Admits to Public Benefits Fraud

Dedham, Mass., – A Quincy woman has been ordered to spend a year under house arrest and pay a six-figure restitution after pleading guilty last week to fifteen indictments of defrauding public benefits programs and providing false or misleading information, State Auditor Suzanne M. Bump and Norfolk District Attorney Michael W. Morrissey announced today.

Nicole Kasimatis, age 46, under-reported her income as a licensed social worker and lied about her employment to fraudulently collect benefits from Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), MassHealth, Social Security, and the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) between August 23, 2006 and April 27, 2018. She provided falsified pay stubs and other documentation to state and federal agencies to secure benefits.

"The scheme operated by Kasimatis was designed to defraud the taxpayers of the Commonwealth, causing both financial damage and undermining public trust in these important programs," Bump said. "For more than five years, prosecutors from the Norfolk District Attorney's Office and investigators from my team diligently worked side-by-side to build a case that lay bare this scheme and bring justice for Commonwealth residents. I commend District Attorney Morrissey and his team for securing this guilty plea."

"This was an unusually complex grand jury investigation, and the partnership of the Auditor's investigators and agents from the Social Security Administration was essential," District Attorney Morrissey said. "This was three complex, interlocking schemes."

Kasimatis pleaded guilty in Norfolk Superior Court to all of the indictments against her on Nov. 23, 2020. Judge Robert C. Cosgrove sentenced her to 36 days in jail (deemed time-served), five years of probation with the first year under home confinement, 200 hours of community service, and ordered to pay \$103,000 in restitution.

"The plea is structured so that the \$103,000 in restitution was made immediately and applied to the theft from the Department of Early Education and Care – the only victim agency with a waiting list for those who need services," District Attorney Morrissey said.

The matter was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Phillip Burr. "This will have an immediate impact on people with children in need of support," District Attorney Morrissey said. "While we were initially seeking a committed state prison sentence, we agreed to this structure in light of COVID restrictions making any trial unlikely for another year and the immediate impact for families in need."

The Office of the State Auditor's Bureau of Special Investigations investigates allegations of public assistance fraud throughout the Commonwealth. Its work ensures taxpayer dollars are used effectively, and that benefits are available to residents who truly need and qualify for them.

About the Office of the State Auditor

The Office of the State Auditor conducts performance audits of state government programs, departments, agencies, authorities, contracts, and vendors. With its reports, the OSA issues recommendations to improve accountability, efficiency, and transparency. The OSA has identified approximately \$1.3 billion in unallowable, questionable, or potentially fraudulent spending and saving opportunities for the Commonwealth since 2011. Last year, auditees reported implementation of 92 percent of the OSA's audit recommendations.

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