

Former Election Consultant Indicted On Federal Fraud Charges

By Administrator

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A federal grand jury in Raleigh has returned an indictment charging **LESLIE MCCRAE DOWLESS JR.**, age 64, of Bladen County, with one count of theft of government property, two counts of social security fraud, and one count of false statements.

According to the publically filed indictment, **DOWLESS** is alleged to have unlawfully obtained Title XVI Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Title II Retirement Insurance Benefits (RIB) by failing to notify the Social Security Administration of his income while receiving those benefits. Specifically, between in or around March 2017, and in or around November 2018, **DOWLESS** received over \$100,000 in payments related to work he performed during the 2018 Midterm Election. During that time, **DOWLESS** continued to receive SSI as well as RIB while concealing his work activity and earnings from the Social Security Administration. As a result of his concealment, the Social Security Administration overpaid **DOWLESS** more than \$14,000 in benefits.

If convicted of the charge of theft of government property, **DOWLESS** faces a maximum penalty of ten years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. If convicted of the charges of social security fraud, **DOWLE** faces a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. If convicted of making false statements, **DOWLESS** faces a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. Each count in the indictment also subjects the defendant to a term of up to three years supervised release following any term of imprisonment. His initial appearance is tentatively scheduled for May 11, 2020, at 9:30 am, in Wilmington.

The charges and allegations contained in the indictment are merely accusations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.

The case is being investigated by the Social Security Administration's Office of the Inspector General and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. This case is being prosecuted by Special

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Assistant United States Attorney Tamika Moses. Ms. Moses is an attorney with the Social Security Administration's Office of the General Counsel, designated to prosecute federal crimes involving Social Security in the Eastern District of North Carolina.