



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Attorney General Frosh, Comptroller Franchot Announce Indictments in Tax Fraud Schemes** *Individuals Allegedly Stole Thousands of Dollars from the State*

**BALTIMORE, MD (January 26, 2017)** – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh and Comptroller Peter Franchot today announced the filing of four criminal cases against four defendants who allegedly stole tens of thousands of dollars from the State of Maryland through tax fraud schemes. The cases announced today demonstrate the Attorney General’s and Comptroller’s commitment to identifying and prosecuting perpetrators who steal Maryland tax money through fraudulent schemes.

“Tax preparers have a special knowledge and a special responsibility to file honest returns,” said Attorney General Frosh. “It’s bad when anyone tries to cheat on their tax returns. When it is a tax preparer, it is inexcusable. The collaboration between the Office of Attorney General and the Comptroller’s Office to combat the problem of fraudulent tax schemes has resulted in the prosecution of those who erode the trust in our tax system.”

“I am personally grateful to Attorney General Frosh and his team for their tireless work toward securing these indictments,” said Comptroller Franchot. “Tax fraud and identity theft pose an immediate threat to the financial security of taxpayers throughout the State of Maryland and across the country. The Maryland Comptroller’s Office is committed to using all of our resources to protect Marylanders from the consequences of these financial crimes. The indictments today send a strong message that we will work together with the Maryland Attorney General’s Office and all law enforcement agencies to fight criminals who attempt to defraud the state and harm law-abiding taxpayers.”

The cases announced today include:

- ***State of Maryland v. Darwin Acosta***

On January 20, 2017, an Anne Arundel County grand jury returned a two-count indictment against Darwin Acosta, 30, of Prince George’s County. According to the allegations contained in the indictment, between March 2014 and June 2014, Acosta prepared and filed fraudulent tax returns with the Comptroller using the personal identifying information of numerous victims. Through the filing of the fraudulent returns, Acosta unlawfully had approximately \$53,700.73 of tax refunds deposited into his personal bank account. Acosta has been charged with one count of felony theft scheme between \$10,000 and \$100,000, and one count of identity fraud.

- ***State of Maryland v. Rochelle Cunningham***  
On January 20, 2017, an Anne Arundel County grand jury returned an 11-count indictment against Rochelle Cunningham, 46, of Baltimore City. According to the allegations contained in the indictment, between March 2005 and April 2009, Cunningham obtained the personal identifying information of numerous victims and used that information to file fraudulent tax returns with the Comptroller in the names of the victims. By filing the fraudulent returns, Cunningham unlawfully had deposited over \$80,000 of tax refunds into various bank accounts she controlled. Cunningham has been charged with one count of felony theft scheme between \$10,000 and \$100,000, and 10 counts of identity fraud.
- ***State of Maryland v. Scott Jacobson***  
On January 20, 2017, an Anne Arundel County grand jury returned a 16-count indictment against Scott L. Jacobson, 38, of Baltimore County. According to the allegations contained in the indictment, during the 2014 tax filing season, Jacobson operated a tax return preparation business through which he prepared and filed fraudulent federal and state tax returns for clients, claiming fraudulently inflated tax refunds. Through the filing of the inflated tax refund claims, Jacobson unlawfully obtained more than \$10,000 in State tax refunds. Jacobson has been charged with 13 counts of false return preparation, counts for theft and attempted theft, and one count of filing a false personal income tax return.
- ***State of Maryland v. Evelyn Thompson***  
On January 24, 2017, the Attorney General filed a criminal information against Evelyn Thompson, 54, of Prince George's County. According to the allegations contained in the information, between January 2014 and April 2016, Thompson, who was not registered as a licensed tax preparer in Maryland, prepared and filed fraudulent tax returns with the Comptroller on behalf of numerous Maryland residents. In most of the returns, Thompson included false information to fraudulently increase the tax refunds her taxpayer clients would receive. Thompson also charged her clients a fee for the preparation and filing of their tax returns. Thompson, however, did not report the fees received on her personal income tax returns. She also included false information on her personal tax returns to fraudulently inflate the tax refunds she received. Thompson has been charged with one count of felony theft scheme between \$10,000 and \$100,000.

Attorney General Frosh and Comptroller Franchot commended the investigative efforts of the Comptroller's Field Enforcement and Revenue Administration Divisions, and the Attorney General's Criminal Investigations Division, along with the Maryland State Police. The cases are being prosecuted by the Attorney General's Office.

An indictment or information is only an accusation and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.