



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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**DOI ARRESTS DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION ("DPR") SEASONAL EMPLOYEE
ON CHARGES OF TAKING BRIBES TO GIVE PARTICIPANTS OF
THE ALTERNATIVE SENTENCING PROGRAM A PASS**

--Arrest was part of DOI undercover operation in which investigators posed as program participants--

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced today the arrest of ROBERT STEPHENS, an employee of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation ("DPR"), on charges of taking bribes and forging signatures on documents submitted to the City.

STEPHENS, 50, of Brooklyn, was charged with five counts each of Bribe Receiving in the Third Degree, a class D felony; Receiving Reward for Official Misconduct in the Second Degree, a class E felony; and Falsifying Business Records in the Second Degree, a class A misdemeanor. If convicted, he faces up to seven years in jail.

STEPHENS has been a seasonal employee at DPR for three years and earns \$12.92 an hour. In 2007, he earned \$15,595.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "Since January, DOI has made several arrests as a result of undercover investigations involving pay offs to City employees or those doing business with the City. The allegations in this case are serious because the Parks worker is charged with receiving money to help individuals evade a criminal sentence. If an individual chooses to engage in this type of illegal behavior, they will be arrested and face prosecution."

DPR Commissioner Adrian Benepe said, "We commend the Department of Investigation for their diligent efforts and hope that today's arrest sends a strong reminder that the Parks Department has a zero tolerance policy on corruption at any level."

According to the criminal complaint and the DOI investigation, between July and August 2007 STEPHENS demanded money from participants who were obligated to perform community service as part of the Alternative Sentencing Program, a program that controls and monitors defendants who are sentenced to perform community service work. In exchange for money, STEPHENS agreed to allow three DOI undercover investigators posing as participants to leave early in the day without performing the required full day of services. At the end of the day, STEPHENS signed out the DOI undercover investigators on a log-in sheet, which was then

submitted to the Alternative Sentencing Program, asserting that the participants had remained on site for the entire day, when in fact they had not. In total, STEPHENS took money on five occasions from undercover investigators for a total of \$120. Stephens' charged conduct represents a cheating of the system.

This arrest is the fourth since 2005 that has resulted from DOI undercover operations designed to test if DPR employees are appropriately administering their portion of the Alternative Sentencing Program, which operates at numerous DPR worksites throughout the City. The three prior defendants each pleaded guilty.

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked DPR Commissioner Adrian Benepe and his staff, as well as the staff from the New York County District Attorney's Office Alternative Sentence Office for their assistance with the investigation.

DOI's Office of the Inspector General for the Department of Parks and Recreation conducted the investigation and arrest with assistance from members of the NYPD Squad assigned to DOI.

The case is being prosecuted by the Office of New York County District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau and is assigned to Assistant District Attorney Lucrece Francois-Dubrovsky, under the supervision of Thomas Wornom, Chief of the Special Prosecutions Bureau.

Criminal complaints are accusations. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country. The agency investigates and refers for prosecution City employees and contractors engaged in corrupt or fraudulent activities or unethical conduct. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City.

**Get the worms out of the Big Apple.
To report someone ripping off the City, call DOI at (212) 825-5959.**