



Department of Justice

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FORMER FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENT AGREES TO PAY \$40,000 TO RESOLVE FALSE CLAIMS ACT ALLEGATIONS

WASHINGTON – Douglas daCosta of Livermore, California, has agreed to pay \$40,000 to resolve allegations that he submitted false claims to the government for paid sick leave when he worked as a federal law enforcement agent for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the Department of Justice announced today.

“When a law enforcement officer misuses taxpayer funds, he does a disservice to his colleagues who serve with professionalism and distinction,” said Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Benjamin C. Mizer, head of the Justice Department’s Civil Division. “This settlement shows that we will not hesitate to hold individuals accountable if they misuse taxpayer funds.”

“Federal agents must be held to answer when they breach the public’s trust,” said Special Agent in Charge Elise Chawaga of the Office of Department of Justice Inspector General’s Fraud Detection Office. “The Office of the Inspector General remains vigilant in its effort to uncover government waste, fraud and abuse and to recover all ill-gotten gains.”

The United States alleged that daCosta submitted the false requests while working as a criminal investigator for the ATF’s San Francisco field division in 2009. From January 2009 until his retirement in June 2009, daCosta claimed more than 80 days of paid sick leave for which he was not eligible, according to the government’s allegations. Specifically, the United States alleged that daCosta falsely represented to his supervisors that he was undergoing extensive treatment for cancer, going so far as to provide a forged letter from a physician to support his claims. The government contends, however, that daCosta did not have cancer and was not undergoing any such treatments. Additionally, at the same time that daCosta was feigning illness to receive paid sick leave from the government, he was working in the private sector, according to the government’s allegations.

This matter was handled by the Civil Division’s Commercial Litigation Branch in conjunction with the Department of Justice’s Office of the Inspector General.

The claims resolved by the settlement are allegations only, and there has been no determination of liability.

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