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**BALTIMORE SCHOOL POLICE OFFICER FACING FEDERAL CHARGES FOR
OVERTIME FRAUD AND TAX VIOLATIONS**

Baltimore, Maryland – A federal grand jury has returned an indictment charging Lawrence E. Smith, age 49, of Perry Hall, Maryland, for federal wire fraud related to allegations that he fraudulently obtained more than \$215,000 in overtime pay and for attempting to avoid paying federal income taxes and filing a false tax return. The indictment was returned on September 7, 2023, and unsealed today upon Smith's arrest.

The defendant is expected to have an initial appearance today in U.S. District Court in Baltimore before U.S. Magistrate Judge J. Mark Coulson at 2:15 today.

The indictment was announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Erek L. Barron; Special Agent in Charge Thomas J. Sobocinski of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Baltimore Field Office; and Acting Special Agent in Charge Kareem A. Carter of the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation, Washington, D.C. Field Office.

Smith began working as a Baltimore City School Police Officer in 2005 and in 2016 was promoted to detective and put in charge of the School Police Overtime Unit. In this role, Smith managed the Overtime Unit and was responsible for the coordination and scheduling of School Police Officer overtime, including his own. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Smith was authorized to receive overtime pay to provide security for COVID testing sites and food sites set up at various Baltimore City Public School System schools and at Baltimore City Recreation and Parks community centers, as well as the COVID-19 hospital and homeless shelter.

According to the indictment, from January 2019 through August 2022, Smith fraudulently received overtime pay for hours for which he had not worked. The indictment alleges that Smith used his position as the Detective in charge of the Overtime Unit for School Police to assign himself to overtime shifts. Smith allegedly falsely claimed that he was working overtime as a School Police Officer for overtime shifts that required his physical presence when he was at home, running personal errands, at other locations socializing, coaching football, and out of state on vacation. The indictment seeks a money judgment of \$215,352, alleged to be the proceeds of the fraud scheme.

In addition, the indictment alleges that Smith submitted Forms W-4 to his employer falsely claiming that he was exempt from federal income tax withholding when in fact, he was not entitled to claim exempt status. Further, Smith allegedly failed to file individual income tax returns for 2017, 2019,

and 2020, and to report his wages and other income to the IRS. Finally, the indictment alleges that Smith filed a false individual tax return for tax year 2018.

If convicted, Smith faces a maximum sentence of 20 years in federal prison for each count of wire fraud; a maximum of five years in federal prison for each count of attempting to evade taxes; and a maximum of three years in federal prison for filing a false tax return. Actual sentences for federal crimes are typically less than the maximum penalties. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after taking into account the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

An indictment is not a finding of guilt. An individual charged by indictment is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings.

United States Attorney Erik L. Barron commended the FBI and IRS-CI for their work in the investigation and thanked the Maryland Office of Inspector General for Education, the Office of Inspector General for the City of Baltimore, and the Baltimore Police Department for their assistance. Mr. Barron thanked Assistant U.S. Attorneys Christine Goo and Matthew Phelps, who are prosecuting the federal case.

For more information on the Maryland U.S. Attorney's Office, its priorities, and resources available to help the community, please visit www.justice.gov/usao-md and <https://www.justice.gov/usao-md/community-outreach>.

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