

News Release

U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Northern District of Ohio*

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Steven Dettelbach, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio, today announced that an information was filed against Richard C. Peplin, Jr., charging him with one count of falsifying his application for a passport. According to court filings, Peplin, age 51, currently resides in Tennessee.

The information charges that the United States Department of Labor filed a federal civil law suit in Case No. 1:02CV2470 against Peplin and his company, Lakewood Manufacturing Company, for the mismanagement of the Lakewood Manufacturing Company Profit Sharing Plan, an employee benefit plan. During the course of the above mentioned proceedings, the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio, found Peplin to be in Contempt of Court for his mishandling of funds in failing to restore funds to the company's profit sharing plan after promising to pay the plan and setting up a number of payment plans to do so. As part of its finding, on or about September 28, 2007, the Court ordered that the defendant be incarcerated for 30 days and surrender his passport. The information charges that, on or about March 7, 2008, Peplin willfully and knowingly made false statements on his Application for a passport with intent to induce and secure for his own use the issuance of a passport under the authority of the United States, contrary to the laws regulating the issuance of such a passport and rules prescribed pursuant to such laws, in that in such Application, the Peplin made the following false statements:

a. That he had lost his current passport in approximately January, 2008, and that he had looked everywhere for it when, in truth and fact, as Peplin well knew, his previous passport had not been lost but was surrendered to the Court; and

b. Peplin attached and submitted with his Application, a letter purportedly signed by A.P.M., as President of M Group LLC, claiming that Peplin was a Vice President of M Group LLC and that his presence was needed in St. Lucia Island to assist in “significant holdings” in the development of property, when, in truth and fact, Peplin well knew, this letter was not authorized or issued by A.P.M, and Peplin had forged the signature of A.P.M. on the letter.

This case was investigated by the United States Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General; the Cleveland Field Offices of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Office of Inspector General, Social Security Administration, Cleveland, Ohio, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Christian H. Stikkan.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government’s burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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