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OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Attorney General James Uthmeier Announces Arrest of Fort Lauderdale Woman Accused of Running Large-Scale Proxy Cheating Operation for Florida Teacher Certification Exams



Courtesy of the Office of the Attorney General

Tallahassee, Fla.—Attorney General James Uthmeier announced the arrest of Kashaundra Knowles, 37, of Fort Lauderdale, for allegedly operating a sophisticated proxy-testing scheme in which she impersonated multiple individuals to secretly take the Florida Teacher Certification Examinations (FTCE) and other exams on their behalf.

“Today, we are sending a clear and unmistakable message: if you try to cheat your way into Florida’s classrooms, we will find you, we will arrest you, and we will hold you accountable,” **said Attorney General James Uthmeier**. “This scheme undermines the very foundation of our education system by placing under-prepared individuals in front of our students, while disadvantaging every honest teacher who worked hard to earn their credentials. Florida families deserve to know their children are being taught by educators who are qualified to do so.”

“Thanks to our partnership with the Attorney General’s Office and the US Department of Education, this misconduct was identified and all who were involved will be held accountable,” **said Department of Education Commissioner Anastasios Kamoutsas.** “Florida continues to uphold the highest standards for its educators. Anything less is unacceptable.”

Knowles is accused of fraudulently obtaining passing scores for clients—several of whom are already employed by or seeking employment with Broward County Public Schools—thereby allowing unqualified individuals to secure or maintain teaching certificates they did not legitimately earn.

The investigation began with a separate probe into cheating on the NCLEX-RN nursing exam and rapidly expanded after Pearson VUE Special Investigations identified Kashaundra Knowles as the individual appearing in check-in photos for a December 6, 2024, nursing exam taken under the name of another person.

Palm-vein biometric analysis, check-in photographs, telephone toll records, text messages, and surveillance then linked Knowles to multiple FTCE proxy attempts between 2024 and 2026. Knowles' own palm-vein template matched those used in exams purportedly taken by other individuals.

In each instance, check-in photos captured Knowles' face instead of the registered candidate, and phone records showed direct coordination immediately before and after test appointments. Knowles herself took a legitimate FTCE exam in 2018, providing the biometric baseline used to identify her as the proxy.

Knowles was arrested on Organized Scheme to Defraud, Unlawful use of a Two Way Communication Device, and Money Laundering. If found guilty as charged, she faces up to 15 years in the Florida Department of Corrections.

The investigation is ongoing and additional arrests are expected.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant Statewide Prosecutor Nicholas Kaleel in the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit.

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