

NEWS RELEASE

Luther Strange

Alabama Attorney General



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AG ANNOUNCES CONVICTION OF FORMER STATE HOUSE EMPLOYEE FOR FAILING TO FILE TAX RETURNS AND PAY INCOME TAXES

(MONTGOMERY) –Attorney General Luther Strange announced the conviction today of William Clay Covington, a former employee of the Alabama House of Representatives, for failure to file income tax returns and failure to pay income taxes.

Covington, 41, pled guilty this morning before Judge William A. Shashy in Montgomery County Circuit Court to four counts of Failure to File Tax Returns and one count of Failure to Pay Income Taxes. Prior to pleading guilty, Covington paid \$15,480.87 in restitution to the Department of Revenue for unpaid taxes, penalties, and interest.

The State's evidence against Covington included records showing that Covington earned \$237,620.40 in wages from the State of Alabama and \$277,000.00 in other income from the Macon County Greyhound Park and the Jefferson County Racing Association from 2006 to 2011. The evidence also showed that Covington failed to pay state taxes on this income and he pleaded guilty to failing to pay income tax for the 2006 tax year. He also pleaded guilty to not filing a tax return for 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009.

"This conviction is a reminder that failure to follow our tax laws will not be tolerated," said Attorney General Strange. "Our office will continue to work with the Department of Revenue to thoroughly investigate and prosecute these crimes, as well as seek to recover funds that are due to the public treasury."

"Although in some cases, discovery of noncompliance of Alabama's tax laws may not be immediate, I assure you, it is eventual," said State Revenue Commissioner Julie P. Magee. "No one wants to pay more taxes than are required, but it is not fair to the honest taxpaying citizens of our state to let others get away with avoiding taxes they rightly owe. It's criminal to misrepresent one's income to the state and evade taxes on that taxable income, regardless of from where it comes. The Department of Revenue remains committed to working with the Attorney General's office, as well as with all arms of our law enforcement community, to prosecute such offenses," said Magee.

Covington is set to be sentenced on August 7, when he faces a penalty of up to one year in jail and a fine of \$25,000 for each of the five counts of which he was convicted.

The Attorney General commended Deputy Attorney General Mike Duffy and Assistant Attorney General Bill Lisenby, Jr. of the Attorney General's Special Prosecutions Division, and Special Agent Madeline Lewis of the Alabama Department of Revenue's Investigations Division.

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