

Metro East Woman Sentenced for Falsifying Records in Bankruptcy

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EAST ST. LOUIS - Dehavalon R. Cook, 46, of Fairview Heights, Illinois, has been sentenced to three years probation for falsifying records in a bankruptcy proceeding, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, Steven D. Weinhoeft, announced today. Cook previously pleaded guilty to the charge on January 29, 2019.

Court documents show that Cook created a fictitious document and forged the signature of an officer of the Court to obtain an automobile loan during the pendency of her bankruptcy case. The document was falsified with the intent to improperly influence the proper administration of a bankruptcy proceeding.

“Today’s sentence makes clear that abuse of the bankruptcy system by falsifying a document and forging the signature of an officer of the court for personal gain will not

be tolerated,” stated Nancy J. Gargula, U.S. Trustee for Southern and Central Illinois and Indiana (Region 10). “I am grateful to U.S. Attorney Weinhoeft and our law enforcement partners for their strong commitment to combating bankruptcy-related crimes as demonstrated by this prosecution.” The U.S. Trustee Program is the component of the U.S. Justice Department that protects the integrity of the bankruptcy system by overseeing case administration and litigating to enforce the bankruptcy laws. Region 10 is headquartered in Indianapolis, with additional offices in Peoria, Illinois, and South Bend, Indiana.

The charges resulted from a referral by the U.S. Trustee for Region 10 to the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois. The investigation was conducted by the Peoria Office of the United States Trustee and the Federal Bureau of Investigation in collaboration with the Southern Illinois Bankruptcy Fraud Working Group, which is coordinated by the U.S. Trustee. The prosecution was handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Norman R. Smith.