

CFO Jimmy Patronis: \$140,000 AOB Fraud Scheme Across Eight Florida Counties Lands Contractor with Grand Theft and Racketeering Charges

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TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Jimmy Patronis announced the arrest of Timothy Matthew Cox, owner of Nationwide Catastrophe Services, Inc. and Restoration Response Services, Inc., for an alleged Assignment of Benefits (AOB) fraud scheme that impacted 19 homeowners in eight Florida counties and one Texas county. Cox stole nearly \$140,000 for home repairs related to damages from tropical weather events that he never provided. As a result of Cox’s alleged activity, the victims’ homes sustained additional damage from significant weather events, including Hurricane Irma.

CFO Jimmy Patronis said, “Criminals who prey on Florida families after a hurricane or tropical storm are some of the worst we see. This type of fraud has skyrocketed and impacts all Florida consumers. One of my first actions I took as your CFO was to create Florida’s Disaster Fraud Action Strike Team to go after this type of fraud. With more than 100 ongoing investigations statewide, we are coming for anyone who takes advantage of our residents during vulnerable times.”

CFO Patronis’ Bureau of Insurance Fraud found that Cox and his team targeted Brevard, Clay, Escambia, Flagler, Orange, Osceola, Seminole and Volusia Counties and Tarrant County, Texas. These areas were impacted by tropical storms and hurricanes, and Cox pressured homeowners to sign an AOB contract to have damages repaired. Cox received \$139,444.97 from the 19 victims and their insurance carriers. After receiving the insurance payments, Cox’s team never started any of the work they were contracted to perform on the 19 homes. The payments made to Nationwide Catastrophe Services, Inc. and Restoration Response Services, Inc. were deposited into bank accounts controlled by Cox, who used the money for personal use.

Cox was arrested and booked into the Polk County Jail June 5, 2018. He faces multiple counts of grand theft and racketeering and could face up to 30 years in jail. The case is being prosecuted by the Attorney General’s Office of Statewide Prosecution.

When consumers sign an AOB they are granting their contractor or restoration specialist with the right to negotiate the insurance claim directly with their insurance carriers. This allows the contractor or restoration specialist to receive the consumer’s insurance benefits directly from the insurance carrier. Consumers who have experienced or witnessed this type of activity are

encouraged to reach out to CFO Patronis' Fraud Tip Hotline by calling 1-800-378-0445. Callers can choose to remain anonymous.

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About CFO Jimmy Patronis

Chief Financial Officer and State Fire Marshal Jimmy Patronis is a native Floridian and a member of Florida's Cabinet, who oversees the Department of Financial Services. CFO Patronis works each day to fight insurance fraud, support Florida's firefighters, and ensure the state's finances are stable to support economic growth in the state. Follow the activities of the Department on Facebook ([FLDFS](#)) and Twitter ([@FLDFS](#)).