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LONG ISLAND MAN INDICTED FOR STEALING THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS
FROM EMPLOYEES IN KICKBACK SCHEME

Defendant Accused of Forcing Workers to Pay Him a Portion of Their Wages

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz, joined by the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI) Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber, announced today that Komal Singh, 52, has been charged with grand larceny and other crimes for allegedly taking thousands of dollars in kickbacks from employees working on a New York City School Construction Authority project at PS 71 in Ridgewood, Queens.

District Attorney Katz said, “The victims worked hard for their money and as alleged, the defendant demanded they kick some of it back to him or face termination. This kind of exploitation is illegal. The prevalence of such schemes is the reason I created the Housing & Worker Protection Bureau, to make sure that employees are protected from unlawful actions. My Office will not relent in our efforts to investigate and prosecute those who seek to take advantage of our workforce.”

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, “Construction foreman Komal Singh used his position to exploit workers reporting to him, squeezing them for thousands of dollars in kickbacks as a condition of getting hired and continuing their work at a School Construction Authority site in Queens, as charged in the indictment. Extortion and kickbacks are not the way to do business in New York City, and DOI will continue to work with its law enforcement partners to hold accountable those who abuse their workers. DOI thanks the Queens District Attorney’s Office for its partnership in this investigation.”

Singh, of South Corona Avenue in Valley Stream, was arraigned Wednesday before Queens County Supreme Court Justice Stephen Knopf on a grand jury indictment charging him with three counts of grand larceny in the third degree, three counts of grand larceny in the fourth degree and violation of New York Labor Law section 198(b). Justice Knopf set the defendant’s return date for June 1, 2022. The defendant faces up to seven years in prison if convicted.

From March of 2019 through February of 2020, the defendant was the foreman at the PS 71 job site and had authority to hire and fire workers. During this time, he allegedly hired the workers with the understanding that each was to pay him \$50.00 per day for each day worked. When the victims complained or stopped paying, they were allegedly fired by the defendant or informed that there was no more work for them. As a result, the defendant was able to extort thousands of dollars in kickbacks from each complainant under the threat of termination.

The investigation was conducted by the New York City Department of Investigation's Office of the Inspector General for the New York City School Construction Authority's Investigators Lourdes Gonzales, Jose Romero, Brian Murray, William Marchesini, and Deputy Counsel Celeste Sharpe, under the supervision of Assistant Inspector General Nicholas Scicutella, First Assistant Inspector General Gerard McEnroe, and Inspector General Felice Sontupe.

DOI would like to thank the New York City School Construction Authority for their cooperation and assistance, especially the Labor Law Compliance Unit and SCA Principal Attorney Deborah Seidenberg.

Assistant District Attorney William Jorgenson, Chief of the District Attorney's Housing and Worker Protection Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Gerard Brave.

Criminal complaints and indictments are accusations. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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