



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
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Department of Justice

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Middle District of Florida

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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People, Technology And Processes, LLC And Its Principals Pay \$320,000 To Resolve False Claims Allegations

Tampa, FL – United States Attorney A. Lee Bentley, III announces that People, Technology and Processes, LLC (“PTP”), Victor Buonamia, and Nicole Buonamia have paid the government \$320,000 to resolve allegations that they submitted improper invoices for work allegedly performed for the United States in support of the U.S. Army in Afghanistan.

PTP is an information technology and professional services company located in Lakeland, Florida. Victor Buonamia is the President and CEO of PTP, and Nicole Buonamia is the CFO. During 2011 and 2012, PTP was a subcontractor to the prime contractor on a government contract awarded by the United States Army Communications-Electronics Command through the Strategic Sources Services (“S3”) Program.

As a subcontractor, PTP submitted invoices for its services to the prime contractor, who then paid those invoices and, in turn, billed those costs to the United States, which paid them. PTP and its principals were aware that PTP was a subcontractor on a United States government contract and that PTP’s bills would ultimately be presented to and paid by the United States.

Between November 2011 and June 2012, PTP submitted invoices that were signed by Victor Buonamia and/or Nicole Buonamia for work allegedly done by PTP employees in Afghanistan under the S3 Contract; however, some of that work was not actually performed. Specifically, during that period, PTP submitted invoices for one employee while he was in another country on R&R for a month, billed for another employee for several weeks after PTP terminated him and flew him back to U.S., and billed one or more weeks for two other employees before they actually started working for PTP. In all, PTP improperly billed \$127,990.90 for work never performed by those employees.

“While healthcare fraud recoveries are an important focus of this office, we pay equal attention to investigating fraud in government procurement, including defense spending,” stated U.S. Attorney

Bentley. “No matter their size, government contractors and subcontractors who improperly seek or obtain payment from the United States will be investigated, prosecuted, and made to repay their ill-gotten gains.”

“This settlement demonstrates the continued commitment of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service and our partners to enforce laws intended to protect the integrity of U.S. Department of Defense programs,” said Special Agent in Charge John F. Khin, Southeast Field Office. “All contractors and subcontractors, who are ultimately paid with American taxpayer dollars, will be held accountable for submitting fraudulent claims to the Government.”

This settlement resolves allegations in a lawsuit filed by relator Aidan Tamer Toprakci in February 2013. That suit was filed under the whistleblower provisions of the False Claims Act, which authorizes private parties to sue for false claims on behalf of the United States and to share in any recovery. Toprakci was employed by PTP in 2012 and disclosed certain of the conduct internally to PTP. The relator has received \$64,000.00 from the proceeds of the settlement.

This case was handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Charles Harden. The case was investigated by the Tampa Resident Agency of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Commands Major Procurement Fraud Unit, and the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction.

The lawsuit was filed in the Middle District of Florida, and is captioned *United States ex rel. Toprakci v. People Technology and Processes, LLC, Victor Buonamia, and Nicole Buonamia*, Case No. 8:13-cv-432-T-33-MAP (M.D. Fla.).

The claims resolved by the settlement are allegations only; there has been no determination of liability.

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Topic:

Financial Fraud

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