



# Department of Justice

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District of Massachusetts

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## **FEDERAL PRISON EMPLOYEE CHARGED WITH ACCEPTING PAYMENTS FROM HIGH-NET-WORTH INMATE**

*Defendant allegedly received over \$90,000 in benefits and a \$50,000 property loan*

BOSTON – A Correctional Counselor for the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) assigned to Federal Medical Center Devens (FMC Devens) in Massachusetts has been charged with accepting payments from an inmate under his care, in violation of his duties as a public official. The defendant is also charged with lying to a bank about a loan he received from the inmate’s business associate and forging the associate’s signature to support this false claim.

William S. Tidwell, 49, of Keene, N.H., was charged by Information in federal court in Boston with receipt of payments by a public official in violation of his official duties, making false statements to a bank and identity theft. Tidwell will appear in federal court in Boston at a later date.

According to the charging documents, Tidwell has been employed by the BOP since 2000 and has been working at FMC Devens since 2008. According to BOP’s rules and policies that govern the duties and conduct of its employees, employees may not receive any payments, gifts, or personal favors from inmates, give preferential treatment to any inmate in the performance of their duties, or engage in outside employment that conflicts with their duties.

In approximately 2014, Tidwell began working as a Correctional Counselor at FMC Devens, a position that give him significant levels of contact with, and authority over, inmates. Among other things, Tidwell was responsible for monitoring inmate work assignments, assigning inmate housing assignments, arranging inmate legal calls and coordinating prison visits for inmates. One of the inmates for whom Tidwell served as a Correctional Counselor was Individual 1 – an ultra-high net worth individual who had been convicted on federal charges in another jurisdiction. It is alleged that, starting in approximately 2018, Individual 1 caused a stream of benefits to be paid to Tidwell.

In November 2018, Tidwell supervised Individual 1, who allegedly directed a close friend and business associate (Individual 2) to wire \$25,000 to Tidwell’s close family member. Thereafter, starting in 2019, Tidwell and Individual 1 allegedly entered into an agreement

pursuant to which Individual 1 would direct thousands of dollars to Tidwell as part of a property management agreement, which used Individual 2 as the conduit through which payments were made to Tidwell. In total, between 2019 and 2020, Tidwell allegedly received over \$65,000 in benefits as part of this property management agreement with Individuals 1 and 2. Tidwell's alleged receipt of payments and his employment relationship with an inmate or a close associate of an inmate violated his official duties as a BOP employee.

Separately, in 2020, it is alleged that Tidwell sought to purchase a home. In connection with seeking financing for the home purchase, Tidwell allegedly received a \$50,000 loan from Individual 2. Tidwell also allegedly made multiple false statements to the bank in connection with his loan application, falsely telling the bank that the \$50,000 was a gift from his employer. It is further alleged that when the bank asked for written proof of this purported gift, Tidwell forged documents to support his earlier claim, including by unlawfully using Individual 2's name and address, and forging Individual 2's signature.

"Corrections officers are placed in a position of public trust. The vast majority of corrections officers carry out their duties with integrity and professionalism. They know that accepting payments from an inmate – as is alleged against Mr. Tidwell here – is a serious violation of that trust and a betrayal of the BOP's mission to care FOR federal inmates in a safe and impartial manner. This office is committed to holding public officials accountable when they exploit their power or official position to enrich themselves and compromise the public interest," said Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy.

"William Tidwell is alleged to have abused his authority and abandoned his duty after he befriended an inmate in his care and accepted tens of thousands of dollars from him," said Christopher DiMenna, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division. "Today's arrest underscores the importance the criminal justice system places on policing its own. Make no mistake, the FBI will continue to work with our partners to root out public corruption wherever it may lie because it not only undermines the integrity of our government but is a violation of the public's trust."

"The safety and security of federal prisons depends on the integrity of Correctional Officers. By allegedly accepting tens of thousands of dollars from an inmate, Tidwell compromised his integrity and jeopardized the safety and security of the institution," said Ryan T. Geach, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General New York Field Office.

The charge of receiving payments in violation of official duties provides for a sentence of up to 15 years in prison, up to three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. The charge of making false statements to a bank provides for a sentence of up to 30 years in prison, up to five years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$1 million. The charge of identity theft provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, up to three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and statutes which govern the determination of a sentence in a criminal case.

Acting U.S. Attorney Levy, FBI Acting SAC DiMenna and DOJ-OIG SAC Geach made the announcement today. Valuable assistance in the investigation was provided by the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kunal Pasricha and Mark Grady of the Criminal Division are prosecuting the case.

The details contained in the charging document are allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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