CITY OF NEW YORK

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Report Released Today

Today, Special Commissioner of Investigation Richard J. Condon released a report detailing an investigation which found that Donnett Davis, who was the parent coordinator assigned to the ACORN High School for Social Justice in Brooklyn, used Department of Education ("DOE") telephone billing records to defraud Verizon of more than $500,000 in merchandise and other valuables. Verizon records showed that Davis began this fraudulent use of telephone billing in 2004, when she was working for the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now ("ACORN").

Davis's conduct came to light when Verizon's Business Link Rewards ("Rewards") database was being "refreshed" by the company's computer technical department and Verizon staff discovered a large account with approximately 9,000 telephone numbers bearing DOE billing codes. Rewards was a program for small business customers of Verizon. Subscribers were assigned one Bonus Credit for every dollar spent with Verizon on qualified charges. The Bonus Credits were redeemable in the form of dining, entertainment, travel, shopping, and other gift certificates. The DOE was prohibited from participating in the Rewards program because the DOE was under a contract billing system. SCI investigators learned that ACORN was the company name associated with the Rewards program bearing the DOE billing codes and the contact name on the account was Donnett Davis. Verizon provided SCI investigators with a 13 page list of rewards redeemed by Davis for the period from February 2004 through the beginning of August 2008; the value exceeded $500,000.

The Special Commissioner recommended that Davis, who resigned from her DOE position in August 2009, be denied future employment with the City school system. He also referred the findings of the investigation to United States Attorney Benton J. Campbell from the Eastern District of New York and Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes.

The Office of the Special Commissioner of Investigation is part of the New York City Department of Investigation and Special Commissioner Condon reports to Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn.