



CITY OF COLLEGE PARK

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STATEMENT

SIMMS SENTENCING UPDATE

COLLEGE PARK, MD May 1, 2018 - On April 19, 2018, former Prince George's County Police Officer Jennifer Simms was sentenced to six months imprisonment, five years' probation and a restitution of \$75,000 to the City of College Park. Simms entered an Alford plea, which means she acknowledges that the State had enough evidence to win a conviction. The State of Maryland alleged that Simms stole \$130,000 in wages from the City by falsifying records while she was employed as a City of College Park Contract Police Officer between 2012 and 2014. The City assisted in compiling evidence for the case.

As part of her sentence, Simms is required to pay the \$75,000 restitution during the five year probationary period. Plea deal negotiations (which include sentencing and restitution) involve the State's Attorney and the Defendant's attorney. While the City was kept informed by the State's Attorney and did provide input, the final decision about what plea deal to accept is up to the State's Attorney's Office.

A conviction is never guaranteed at trial. In 2017, the State's Attorney prosecuted Simms in a full trial for theft allegations of over \$100,000 of Prince George's County monies. In that case, which was later dismissed, Judge C. Philip Nichols found Simms guilty of felony theft of only \$1,500. Judge Nichols presided over both the 2017 County and the 2018 City cases against Simms. The plea deal reached by the State's Attorney prevented weeks of trial with an uncertain outcome.

Harold Simms, the husband of Jennifer Simms, was charged in connection with his wife's case and awaits trial. He was a part-time City Contract Police Officer during the same time-frame. No other City staff nor any other City contract police officers were involved in this scheme.

The City has made changes in the Contract Police Program to ensure that theft of wages or similar issues do not happen again. The position of an Assistant Contract Police Supervisor was created to complete random status checks and to monitor communications records with scheduled officers. The City's Department of Public Services oversees the City's Contract Police Program and reviews all police shift activity logs for accuracy. Additional measures may be imposed following a broader discussion of public safety operations in the City.

The City thanks the State's Attorney's office, the Prince George's County Department of Police Internal Affairs Division, and the City's Code Enforcement Division for their dedication and hard work with this case.