



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **For Immediate Release**

### **MDOC Employee Arrested at South Mississippi Correctional Institution Charged with Extortion, Conspiracy to Introduce Contraband into Prison, and Possession of Marijuana**

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Jackson – South Mississippi Correctional Institution (SMCI) employee Joshua Benjamin Dickinson was arrested Friday, September 13 at 2:45 p.m. by investigators of the Mississippi Department of Corrections' Internal Audit Division (IAD) and agents from the Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics (MBN). Dickinson's arrest followed an in-depth joint investigation by IAD and MBN.

“Our agency has a zero tolerance for the intentional abuse and violation of correctional policy and procedure by any MDOC staff member,” said MDOC Commissioner Christopher Epps. “We will work untiringly to investigate and ferret out all wrong doers within our ranks. We will be aggressive in our investigations of staff who abuse their positions of trust and through their actions disrupt the integrity and safety of our correctional system and public safety.”

According to investigating officials, Dickinson, of Richton, Miss., who had served as a correctional officer at SMCI since November 2001, was charged with two counts of extortion, and one count each for conspiracy to introduce contraband onto prison grounds and possession of marijuana on prison grounds. Possession of marijuana on prison grounds carries a maximum sentence of seven years imprisonment and up to a \$25,000 fine. Extortion carries a maximum sentence of five years imprisonment and up to \$5,000 fine. Conspiracy to Introduce Contraband (Narcotics) carries a maximum sentence of fifteen years imprisonment and up to a \$25,000 fine.

Dickinson was taken to the Greene County Jail in Leakesville, Miss., following his arrest where he remains incarcerated awaiting his initial appearance today on the aforementioned charges.

