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Attorney General Steve Marshall Announces Limestone County Sheriff Mike Blakely Indicted on Theft and Ethics Charges

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Steve Marshall announced the indictment* and arrest of Michael Anthony Blakely, the sheriff of Limestone County, on 13 counts of theft and ethics charges. Blakely, 68, surrendered to authorities and was later released on \$49,000 bond.

The indictment includes 13 charges that cover a range of conduct over multiple years. Specifically, the first four counts charge Blakely with four separate thefts from his campaign account that total \$11,000. Counts five through 10 charge Blakely with theft or ethics charges stemming from his illegally taking money from Limestone County funds, including from the Sheriff's Law Enforcement Fund. Count 11 charges Blakely with soliciting a \$1,000 wire transfer from a subordinate other than in the ordinary course of business. Finally, counts 12 and 13 charge Blakely with using his official position or office to acquire interest-free loans. Specifically, count 12 charges Blakely with using his official position or office to obtain interest-free loans in the form of a \$50,000 cashier's check and/or a \$22,189.68 credit. Count 13 charges Blakely with using his official position or office to obtain interest-free loans by taking money from a safe that was used to store the Limestone County inmates' personal funds.

"Public officials are entrusted to perform their duties honestly and above reproach," said Attorney General Marshall. "When that bond of trust is broken, our society suffers undue harm. My office—working with our federal and state partners—is committed to ensuring that the violators of the public trust be held accountable under the law. I would like to thank the Federal Bureau of Investigation for its investigative assistance in this case. Anyone with information regarding corrupt practices by public officials is encouraged to contact the Alabama Attorney General's Office at reportcorruption@ago.state.al.us."

"While the overwhelming majority of public officials serve honorably, those who corrupt the operations of government rob their communities—their friends and neighbors—of the fundamental right to honest government, and we must insist on absolute honesty, integrity and trustworthiness from everyone," said FBI Birmingham Special Agent in Charge (SAC) Johnnie Sharp, Jr. "I want the citizens of north Alabama to know that if they have information about potential wrongdoing by a public official or law enforcement officer, the FBI wants to hear from you. If you have information, call my office's Public Corruption Tip Line at (844) 404-TIPS, share what you know, and join in the fight against corruption."

The case is being prosecuted by the Attorney General's Special Prosecutions Division. No further information about the investigation or about Blakely's alleged crimes other than that stated in the indictment may be released at this time.

**An indictment or warrant is merely an accusation. Defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.*

