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DA's October Amnesty: Final Chance for Hot Check Writers

Houston, Tx – The District Attorney's special October Amnesty program will allow bad check writers to pay up to avoid criminal charges and arrest in a later Harris County-wide warrant sweep, District Attorney Patricia Lykos announced Wednesday.

The District Attorney's Check Fraud Division is sending out letters this week to notify an estimated 500 offenders of the chance to make good on their bad checks before the end of October. It warns them of the considerable consequences if they don't – criminal charges of theft, potential arrest at their home or workplace, sizable fees and court costs, and a criminal record.

"The program presents offenders with the final opportunity to make a new start," said Division Chief John Boone. "Those who compensate their victims now can be directed out of the criminal justice system – those who don't will be subject to full prosecution and penalties under the law."

District Attorney Lykos authorized the October Amnesty after the success of the first-ever amnesty offer last July. That 18-day program drew a record amount of almost \$130,000 in restitution and related fees.

The follow-up warrant sweep netted 28 arrests in a coordinated roundup by the DA's Office, Sheriff's Office and every Constable's Office in the county. On an undisclosed date in November, those agencies will again combine for post-amnesty arrest sweeps.

The previous program was prompted by a backlog of bad check cases. October Amnesty will focus on fresh offenses. The program also benefits merchants and other victims because it expedites the repayment of losses, especially during these critical times of economic uncertainty for businesses and residents.

For inquiries about how to make restitution, and other program details, contact the District Attorney's Check Fraud Division at 713-755-7884.

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