

Dominican national pleads guilty to Social Security misuse and stealing government benefits

A Dominican national pleaded guilty today in federal court in Springfield in connection with using another individual's identity to fraudulently obtain government benefits.

Andrea Perez, 48, pleaded guilty to false representation of a Social Security number and theft of government money. U.S. District Court Judge Mark G. Mastroianni scheduled sentencing for Dec. 21, 2021. Perez was indicted in February 2021.

Perez used the identity of a Puerto Rican citizen to apply for and obtain Housing Choice Voucher Program, commonly known as Section 8, housing assistance benefits as well as to receive disability benefits from the Social Security Administration. As a result, from April 2019 through February 2021, Perez fraudulently received \$17,380 in Section 8 housing assistance benefits and, from August 2017 through August 2018, approximately \$12,570 in fraudulent Social Security benefits.

The charge of false representation of a Social Security number provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss, whichever is greater. The charge of theft of government money provides for a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss, whichever is greater. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Acting United States Attorney Nathaniel R. Mendell; Jermaine

Jack, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General, Boston Field Office; and Christina Scaringi, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Inspector General, made the announcement today. Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Karen Burzycki of Mendell's Major Crimes Unit is prosecuting the case.