

# **Dominican National Pleads Guilty To Misusing U.S. Passport, Stealing \$45,000 in Government Benefits**

A Dominican national pleaded guilty today in federal court in Boston to multiple federal charges.

Daniel Polonia Morillo, 57, a Dominican national residing in Lawrence, pleaded guilty to false statement on an application for Social Security benefits, false statement in an application and use of a passport, and theft of public money. U.S. District Court Judge Denise J. Casper scheduled sentencing for Aug. 28, 2019.

In December 2016, Polonia Morillo used the name, Social Security number, and date of birth of a U.S. citizen to apply for Social Security benefits. At the time he applied, Polonia Morillo produced a United States passport in the other person's name as proof of his identity. In addition, Polonia Morillo used the identity of the U.S. citizen to obtain Medicaid benefits from March 2012 through October 2018, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) benefits from April 2015 through October 2018. In total, Polonia Morillo stole over \$45,000 in federally-funded benefits.

The charge of false statement on an application for Social Security benefits provides for a sentence of no greater than 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 false statement in an application and use of a passport provides for a sentence of no greater than 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. The charge of theft of public funds provides for a sentence of no greater than 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.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling; Scott Antolik, Special Agent in Charge of the Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General, Boston Field Office; Peter C. Fitzhugh, Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in Boston; and Suzanne M. Bump, State Auditor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, made the announcement. Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Karen Burzycki of Lelling's Major Crimes Unit is prosecuting the case.