

Marlboro Woman Pleads Guilty to Stealing \$68,223 in Welfare Fraud

A Marlboro woman pleaded guilty today to fraudulently receiving Social Security disability benefits, MassHealth, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and Section 8 housing assistance.

Maribel Rodriguez, 63, pleaded guilty to four counts of theft of public funds and two counts of making false statements. U.S. District Court Judge Nathaniel M. Gorton scheduled sentencing for July 7, 2022. Rodriguez was charged in December 2020.

Over a period of approximately 12 years, Rodriguez stole \$68,223 in Social Security benefits, \$1,908 in MassHealth benefits, \$21,790 in SNAP benefits (previously known as Food Stamps) and \$161,277 in Section 8 housing assistance benefits. In June 2016, she falsely informed the Social Security Administration that she lived alone when, in fact, she was living with her husband. Similarly, Rodriguez falsely told the Marlborough Community Development Authority in May 2017 that she was the only member of her household.

The charges of theft of public funds provide 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. The charges of making false statements provide 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. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

United States Attorney Rachael S. Rollins; Sharon MacDermott,

Special Agent in Charge of the Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigations, Boston Field Division; Phillip M. Coyne, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Health and Human Service's Office of Inspector General, Boston Regional Office; and Suzanne M. Bump, State Auditor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts made the announcement today. Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Karen Burzycki of Rollins' Major Crimes Unit is prosecuting the case.