



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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District of Arizona*

Public Affairs
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MEXICAN NATIONAL PLEADS GUILTY TO IDENTITY THEFT SPANNING 30 YEARS

PHOENIX – Chana Sotelo, 65, of Nogales, Sonora, Mexico, pleaded guilty on Tuesday to aggravated identity theft and illegal reentry after removal. Ms. Sotelo admitted that she was a citizen of Mexico and had used the victim's identity for approximately 30 years, during which time she obtained a driver's license, a Social Security card and a U.S. passport under the victim's identity. Ms. Sotelo had been removed from the United States to Mexico on March 17, 2007, after serving a one-and-a-half-year prison sentence for an unrelated conviction in Pinal County, but was found in Arizona on December 29, 2008, at a Social Security Administration office as she attempted to collect retirement benefits under the victim's identity.

A conviction for illegal reentry after removal carries a maximum penalty of ten years of imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both, and a conviction for aggravated identity theft carries a consecutive sentence of two years of imprisonment. In determining an actual sentence, Judge James A. Teilborg will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Sentencing is set before U.S. District Judge James A. Teilborg on September 21, 2009.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Social Security Administration, the U.S. Department of State, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The prosecution is being handled by James R. Knapp, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-09-0166-PHX-JAT
RELEASE NUMBER: 2009-198(Sotelo)

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