



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney  
Southern District of Mississippi

---

188 East Capitol Street, Suite 500      601-965-4480  
Jackson, Mississippi 39201              FTS 490-4480

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**February 25, 2009**

**DEFENDANT GUILTY OF ALIEN SMUGGLING**

Gulfport, Miss. - **JOE ALLEN FOSTER** of Houston, Texas pleaded guilty today to transporting undocumented aliens who were discovered during a stop by the Border Patrol in Gulfport in October 2008, Acting U.S. Attorney Stan Harris announced. **FOSTER** entered his guilty plea before Senior United States District Judge Walter J. Gex III in federal district court in Gulfport, Mississippi.

**FOSTER** was charged in a one-count indictment voted by the Grand Jury in November 2008. The indictment charged **FOSTER** with transporting aliens knowing or recklessly disregarding the fact that the aliens had entered the United States in violation of law.

According to the affidavit in support of the criminal complaint, a United States Border Patrol agent was performing traffic check duties on Interstate 10 in Gulfport, when he observed a Chevrolet Express van that defendant **FOSTER** was driving. As explained at the preliminary hearing, the agent recognized the commuter van as a *camioneta* van which provides

point-to-point transportation within the United States. Upon stopping the van, the Border Patrol found that it contained a total of 15 passengers, including unaccompanied minors. All 15 passengers were questioned as to their citizenship and all stated they were illegally present in the United States without immigration documents. The passenger manifest showed that the passengers were bound for various cities on the East Coast. Records checks showed that **FOSTER** had been previously apprehended in Texas twice for transporting undocumented aliens.

Defendant **FOSTER** faces a maximum of five years of imprisonment. In addition to possible imprisonment, the defendant faces a maximum fine of \$250,000, and three years of supervised release.

Assistant United States Attorney GAINES CLEVELAND is the prosecutor in charge of the case. Mr. HARRIS praised the efforts of the United States Border Patrol for its diligent work in the investigation of this case.

# # #