

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Tax Preparer Sentenced to 12 Months in Federal
Prison for Fraudulent Preparation of Tax Returns

(More)

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TRENTON – A Burlington Township tax preparer was sentenced to 12 months in federal prison today for the fraudulent preparation of income tax returns of his clients, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

U.S. District Judge Freda L. Wolfson also ordered Amando Santos, 61, to pay back taxes, interest and penalties totaling \$149,921. Judge Wolfson continued the defendant's release on a \$100,000 bond pending his surrender to officials with the U.S. Bureau of Prisons upon designation of the institution where he will serve his prison term.

Santos pleaded guilty before Judge Wolfson on March 6, 2008, to a one-count Information that charged him with fraud in the preparation of tax returns. At his plea hearing, Santos stated that from 2001 to 2004, he operated a tax preparation business called "APS Income Tax Service" from his residence in Burlington Township. As part of the business, Santos admitted that he prepared U.S. individual income tax returns for client taxpayers. On many of the returns he prepared, Santos included false or altered information, such as inflated itemized deductions and false or overstated losses and expenses, to either reduce the taxes owed by his clients or obtain larger refunds for his clients. Santos admitted that between April 2002 and April 2004, he prepared at least 43 fraudulent tax returns.

In determining the actual sentence, Judge Wolfson consulted the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence. In sentencing the defendant, Judge Wolfson granted a defense request for a variance from the U.S. Sentencing Guideline range based on Santos' age and health problems.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Christie credited Special Agents of the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigations, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge William Offord in Newark, with the investigation leading to the guilty plea.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas J. Eicher of the Criminal Division in Trenton.

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Defense Attorney: Thomas Dunn, Esq. Glen Rock