

NEWS

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Vineland Tax Preparer Sentenced to 12 Months in Prison for Preparation of False Tax Returns

(More)

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CAMDEN – A Vineland tax preparer was sentenced to 12 months in federal prison today for her scheme to defraud the Internal Revenue Service of income tax revenues owed from her clients, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

U.S. District Judge Joseph E. Irenas also ordered Janet Ramirez, 37, of Hammonton, to serve one year of supervised release upon the completion of her prison term. Judge Irenas continued the defendant's release on a \$100,000 unsecured bond pending her surrender to officials with the U.S. Bureau of Prisons on a date to be determined by prison authorities.

Ramirez pleaded guilty before Judge Irenas on Aug. 26, 2009, to a one-count Information that charged her with aiding and assisting in the preparation of false and fraudulent tax returns. At her plea hearing, Ramirez stated that from 2004 through 2008, she owned and operated a tax preparation business named Primetax Associates which is located in Vineland. Ramirez admitted that for the tax years of 2003 through 2007, she operated a scheme to defraud the Internal Revenue Service of income tax revenues owed in connection with 18 taxpayers.

Ramirez admitted that her fraudulent scheme involved the use of false itemized deductions on Schedule A and fraudulent employee business expenses on Form 2106 of her clients' personal income tax returns. Ramirez admitted that her clients did not provide her with the false information or documentation that she included on Schedule A and Form 2106 their tax returns.

Ramirez admitted that in most cases, the reduction of her clients' tax liability resulted in the clients receiving inflated tax refunds to which they were not entitled. In fact, Ramirez admitted that she prepared and caused to be filed approximately 50 tax returns for the 18 clients for tax years 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 that contained false and fraudulent information and resulted in a total tax loss of more than \$121,000.

“As we approach the beginning of this year's filing season, today's sentence should serve as a reminder that taxpayers should be careful when choosing a return preparer,” stated William P. Offord, Special Agent in Charge of IRS Criminal Investigation. “While most return preparers provide excellent service to their clients, a few dishonest preparers file fraudulent returns to defraud the government, the tax paying public and their own clients.”

Prior to sentencing, the IRS recouped approximately \$121,000 in loss taxes from Ramirez's 18 clients.

In determining the actual sentence, Judge Irenas 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.

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

Fishman credited Special Agents of the IRS Criminal Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge William P. Offord, with the investigation leading to the guilty plea.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew Smith of the U.S. Attorney's Office Criminal Division in Camden.

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Defense Attorney: Fred Klepp, Esq. Cherry Hill