

For Immediate Release
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DEMING WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO SOCIAL SECURITY FRAUD

LAS CRUCES – Today in federal court in Las Cruces, Deming, New Mexico resident **Barbara Ann Apodaca**, 61, pled guilty to a two-count indictment charging her with Social Security fraud and with making false statements to the Social Security Administration.

The indictment alleges that, between February 2006 and August 2007, Apodaca fraudulently received Social Security Survivors Insurance Benefits on behalf of her four grandchildren. According to the criminal complaint filed in this case, Apodaca's grandchildren were eligible for social security benefits after their father died in 2000. Apodaca admitted that she applied for the survivors benefits on behalf of her grandchildren, but when the children left her care, she failed to notify the Social Security Administration and continued to receive benefit payments through August 2007. Apodaca also admitted that in February 2007, she made false statements to the Social Security Administration by falsely claiming that her grandchildren lived with her from February 2006 through January 2007.

United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that Apodaca could receive a sentence of up to five years of imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. Apodaca remains out of custody on a \$5,000 unsecured bond pending her sentencing hearing.

The charges stemmed from an investigation by the Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Stephen Wong and Marisa Lizarraga.

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