



Department of Justice

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Northern District of Georgia

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TWO INDICTED IN VISA PROGRAM FRAUD

Federal Agency Worker & Wife Assisted Aliens in Obtaining Visas and Shielding them from Detection

Atlanta, GA - HASMUKH C. PATEL, 52, a Business Interface Representative for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and former USCIS Adjudication Officer, and his wife, NITIGNA H. PATEL, 46, both of McDonough, Georgia, were indicted by a federal grand jury on May 13, 2008. The indictment, which was made public today, charges both defendants with conspiracy to encourage and induce aliens to enter and remain in the United States illegally. HASMUKH C. PATEL is charged separately with one count of accepting money to perpetrate a fraud on the United States and eight counts of exceeding his authorized access to the Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection computer network system, known as TECS.

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said, "It is disturbing when a federal employee with inside experience with the TECS system is alleged to have used that knowledge and access for personal gain and as part of criminal activity. The alleged criminal actions of this federal official and his wife should not reflect upon the thousands of federal employees who are honest and work hard to enforce our immigration laws."

Wayne H. Salzgaber, the Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General's Special Investigations Division said, "As a USCIS employee, Mr. Patel is entrusted with the responsibility of protecting the integrity of the U.S. Immigration System. Any alleged misconduct by someone in his position that betrays this trust or undermines our immigration laws will not be tolerated, but instead will be aggressively investigated."

According to United States Attorney Nahmias and the indictment: The indictment alleges that HASMUKH C. PATEL corruptedly received a sum of money in exchange for which he obtained a non-immigrant worker visa on behalf of a foreign national by filing false petitions with the United States Department of Labor and USCIS alleging that the alien would be employed in his household. The indictment also alleges that HASMUKH C. PATEL and NITIGNA H. PATEL encouraged and induced four aliens to enter the United States in violation of law. The indictment alleges that the PATELS conspired to encourage aliens to come to the U.S. for the PATELS' private financial gain.

HASMUKH C. PATEL was arrested today by federal agents. He entered a not guilty plea to the charges at his arraignment and was granted bond by a United States Magistrate. NITIGNA H. PATEL is scheduled to be arraigned tomorrow.

Members of the public are reminded that the indictment contains only allegations. A defendant is presumed innocent of the charges and it will be the government's burden to prove a defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of the United States Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General (DHS OIG), the U.S. Department of State's Diplomatic Security Service, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General (DOL OIG).

Assistant United States Attorneys William L. McKinnon, Jr. and Susan Coppedge are prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.