



U.S. Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, AUGUST 23, 2011
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**MEXICAN CITIZEN FOUND IN ROCKFORD PLEADS GUILTY TO
FRAUDULENTLY OBTAINING UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS
AND ILLEGALLY RE-ENTERING THE UNITED STATES**

ROCKFORD — A Mexican citizen located in Rockford, Ill., pleaded guilty today in Federal Court to fraudulently obtaining unemployment benefits and to illegally re-entering the United States after having been deported. The defendant, Antonio Perez-Soto, 36, entered his guilty plea this afternoon during a hearing conducted by U.S. District Judge Frederick J. Kapala.

In a written plea agreement, Perez-Soto admitted that from Jan. 16 through April 19, 2011, he fraudulently obtained \$3,866 in unemployment benefits from the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES.) Perez-Soto admitted that he made several false statements on his application for unemployment benefits, including: 1) falsely stating that his name was “Gabriel Abarca”; 2) providing a false social security number; and 3) falsely stating that he is a United States citizen. To be eligible for unemployment benefits, an individual must either be a United States citizen and possess a valid social security number, or have valid alien registration documents. Perez-Soto’s false application caused IDES to mail an unemployment benefits card to Perez-Soto at the address listed on the application. The mailing of this debit card was the basis for the federal mail fraud charge to which Perez-Soto pleaded guilty.

In addition, Perez-Soto pleaded guilty to illegally re-entering the United States after having been previously deported. In his plea agreement, Perez-Soto acknowledged that he has previously

been deported from the United States to his native Mexico on three prior occasions, the latest deportation occurring on December 2, 2006.

Mail fraud carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine, and restitution to the victim of \$3,866 is mandatory. The charge of illegally re-entering the United States after deportation also carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. The actual sentence will be determined by the United States District Court, guided by the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines. Sentencing has been set for Nov. 23, 2011, at 2:30 p.m.

The guilty plea was announced by Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; James Vanderberg, Special Agent in Charge of the Chicago Office of the U.S. Department of Labor – Office of the Inspector General; and Ricardo A. Wong, Chicago Field Office Director for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement - Enforcement and Removal Operations.

The government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Scott A. Verseman.

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